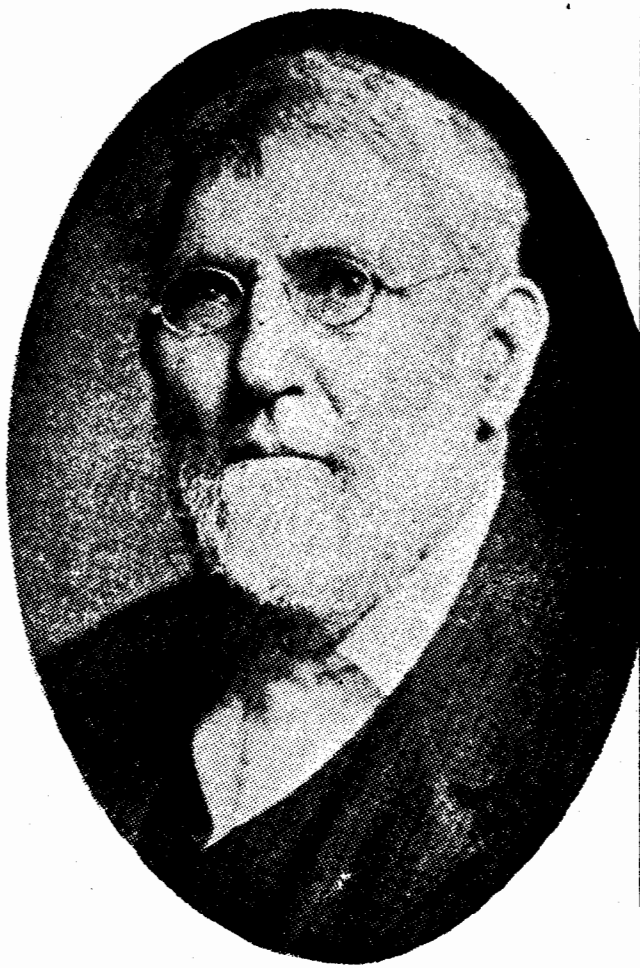
RESTORATION *Review*

In This Issue:

THE AGE OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL
by
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
(Professor of History, Harvard University)



So long as a man exhibits a teachable disposition, is willing to hear, to learn and obey the truth of God, I care not how far he may be, how ignorant he is, I am willing to recognize him as a brother.

—David Lipscomb

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RESTORATION *Review*

A Quarterly Journal of Religion and Education

Dedicated to the Ideal of Restoration
of Primitive Christianity to Modern Religion
and Morality to Modern Education

LEROY GARRETT, *Editor*

CLINT EVANS, *Publisher*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	129
The Age of Alexander Campbell, *Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.*	136
Accountability and Its Implications, *Vance Carruth*	152
Drifting and Dreaming, *W. Carl Ketcherside*	171
The Christian and the Great Ideas, *Gerald Richards*	176
Notes on Recent Literature	186

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Editorial . . .

LEROY GARRETT, Editor

THE CHURCH OF GOD'S CHOICE

In a recent issue of a weekly journal published by the "Church of Christ" wing of our great disciple brotherhood there appeared a well-written poem entitled *The Church of His Choice.* The poem describes the futility of the doctrines of men and points out that he who searches the Bible can discover for himself the true church. The contrast is drawn between the church of man's choice and the church of God's choice. The poem closes with these words:

Its members are those
Who believe He arose,
Who repent of their wickedness done;
And next, we must stress,
"With the mouth" they confess
That Jesus, the Christ, is God's Son.
Into Him they're baptized,
From the waters they rise
In newness of life to rejoice.
And these are the souls
Who have left earthly goals
To belong to the church of God's choice.

This poem illustrates how the church has been made a vital part of the gospel of Christ by modern disciples. We forget that it was the Christ that was central in the kerugma of the early church. They did not preach the church either as God's choice or man's choice. Today much preaching among our people is designed to prove that there is but one church and that we (and *only* we!) are that church. We are the church of God's choice! There are several things wrong with this: (1) It assumes that we are the only ones who preach the gospel of Christ by which men are saved and become members of Christ's church; (2) It assumes that we ourselves are free of the sectarianism that we condemn in others; (3) It is an oversimplification of the serious problem of the nature of the united church, for it is hardly constructive to argue that everyone should conform to "Church of Christ" religion; (4) It is a misinterpretation of the Restoration Movement in that it confuses the church with the Movement itself.

The more liberal disciples among us may not realize how prevalent this religious exclusiveness is among the more conservative elements of our brotherhood. In a tract written by Don H. Morris, president of Abilene Christian College, entitled *What Is the Church of Christ?* we are told that the "Church of Christ" is the New Testament church, that it is identical to the apostolic church in faith, doctrine and practice. President Morris goes so far as to contend that his "Church of Christ" is *the movement* started by the Campbells and Stones in the nineteenth century! After discussing the work of the founding fathers he says, "The movement has grown until there are 14,000 to 15,000 churches of Christ. Total membership is estimated between 1.5

and 2 million." This makes the anti-instrument "Church of Christ" the exclusive and direct heir of the great Restoration Movement, for the 14,000 congregations that Morris refers to include only those of his own party. The one million to two million members of "the movement" refers only to "Church of Christ" folk! The two million "Disciples of Christ" who spring from the same Movement and who have obeyed the same gospel are not included. It should furthermore be observed that there can be no "Christian world" to a man like Dr. Morris. To him the body of Christ does not include any Methodists and Baptists who have obeyed the same Lord he obeyed. Actually the man speaks merely in behalf of another *party* in Christendom that has the denominational label of "Church of Christ." While this is no worse than the existence of any other sect in our mixed up religious world (since they were after all dumped in our laps by our forebears), it is inexcuseable for anyone of us to make the puerile claim that we have some priority on being right while all others are wrong.

Another illustration of this absolutism in religion comes from a brochure issued by the Edgefield Church of Christ in Dallas. In an advertisement of a special service mention is made of "the Restoration Movement which swept this country at the beginning of the 19th century." It goes on to read: "Out of this movement came the Restoration of the Church of Christ to what its adherents believe to be the ancient order of the New Testament Church. Members of the church total about 1,800,000."

Some of our brethren have about reached the place where they can write out a list of *all* the Christians and submit the names of *all* those who will be in heaven! My objection to such statements as those quoted is that the thinking is unsound and the conclusions are unfounded. I also object to the misplaced emphasis on the idea of *the right church*—as if it were one's relationship to the church that really counts rather than to Christ Jesus! This peremptory attitude of my people is wrong because it assumes that the great Restoration Movement with all its principles and ideals has reached its apex of glory in "the Church of Christ." These brethren need not talk about a restoration of New Testament Christianity, for it is *already* accomplished in their own faith and practice! There are two conclusions that we must avoid if we remain truly restoration-minded. The first is that Restoration is already accomplished; the second is that it cannot be accomplished. Either of these conclusions will spell our ruin as helpful servants in the Kingdom of God.

The basic fallacy however is in equating the *movement* to restore primitive Christianity with the church itself. Notice that the Dallas disciples speak of the Church of Christ *coming out of the Restoration Movement.* This simply is not true unless perhaps a "Church of Christ" in some sectarian sense is meant. Certainly the church of the New Testament existed for 1900 years before the Restoration Movement came along. And if there had been no such

movement it would have continued to exist just the same. We have a better perspective if we view the Restoration Movement as within and among the divided church of God. It was the church that produced the Restoration Movement and not the reverse of that. It was a divided, faction-ridden, sectarian church that produced it, but it was the church just the same. It was never the intention of the Restoration fathers that anything should come out from their movement except a united church. Lest we forget that it was the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians that started our beloved Restoration Movement. The truth is that nothing should have "come out" of the movement in the form of another religious body. It may well be that here lies our great mistake. We have raped the glorious Restoration principle by leaving the very people who produced it and forming another sect. Correction: *by forming three sects with more and more in prospect!* My "Church of Christ" brethren must cease talking about how they have restored primitive Christianity, for someone may ask the embarrassing question "Which one of the Churches of Christ is the restored church?"

Suppose our disciple fathers had remained within the framework of the denominations that nurtured them and patiently and lovingly worked for Restoration in the established churches? This is the question that deserves careful study. One fact that impresses me is that the scriptures lend no encouragement to the idea of Christians separating themselves from other Christians. It rather says that "they who separate themselves are sensual" and division and schism are listed among the works of the flesh. Ponder this question: Why should a restoration-minded Methodist leave the Methodists? He is just where we want him, is he not? Why not let him start a work of love (a sort of fifth column movement) among the Methodists in behalf of Restoration ideals?

Somewhere along the line many of us got the idea that a person is a sectarian just because he is a Methodist or a Baptist—and we also got the idea that one is *not* a sectarian just because he is in the Christian Church or Church of Christ. Recently I addressed a Methodist Church on the ideal of Restoration. Among the great majority of them that commended what I said was a man who stressed the point that he had always believed in and worked for the oneness of Christ's church. He was willing and eager to see his own Methodist Church emulsify into the one great church of God. Is that man a sectarian? Is he a factionist? Perhaps not nearly so much as the censorious and judgmental individual who has it all figured out that God will reject those who use instrumental music, believe in premillennialism, or practice open membership.

This is not saying that doctrine is not important (as some of my readers have interpreted me), but it is an avowal that some truths have priority over others. While I do not hesitate to state that the instrument question, premillennial concepts, and so-called open membership are of such vital importance to the eventual welfare of the kingdom of God that they must remain on the agenda for

fair, full, and free discussion, I nonetheless believe that there are neglected areas in our faith and practice that demand prior consideration. Though Paul agreed that "meats and drinks" had their place, he talked about "righteousness, peace and joy" as comprising the kingdom.

But let's get back to our Methodist friend. Some argue that he should leave and unite with us so that he can worship correctly, such as break bread each Lord's day. I doubt if we are such a haven of truth and righteousness as to make that argument. Too, it may be that we have overplayed our hand on being so right on the externals. Suppose the *frequency* of the Supper is what interests Jesus? Perhaps not since he said *"As often as* you eat this bread and drink this cup . . ." And yet I believe frequency is important. It is priority of truths once more.

Others say that since the Bible commands "Come out from among her, my people, and be you separate" that the people of other churches should come to us. But this was a call to God's people to come out of *paganism!* We can hardly place "the denominational churches" in the same category with pagan Rome.

It is argued that if my Methodist friend "stands for the truth" (this loaded phrase among my people means contending for what *we* think is right and upholding *our* pet hobbies), then he will be driven out by those who hate "sound doctrine." Those who so argue should read the story of that pioneer of the disciples, "Raccoon" John Smith, who was reared among the Baptists and who insisted upon staying with them in his labors for Restoration. When some of them insisted that he separate himself from them, he replied that he could not do that because of his great love for them!

Since Christianity is so personal I think it best to leave the decision of the "where" and the "how" of working for Restoration up to the individual. If the Methodist feels that he can work for the good cause among us better than elsewhere, then he can leave the Methodists on amiable terms and continue in his humble way to influence them as an avowed disciple. If he chooses to remain where he is, we should leave that to him and his Lord and work with him for the good of all wherever he may be.

I have said several things in making the point that "the church of Gods choice" is much bigger than our narrow, sectarian outlook. Let us cease this measurement of the church of Jesus Christ by the yardstick of our own arbitrary practices. Surely the kingdom of God on earth is more than the counting of noses in the ranks of fundamentalist disciples. God's church on earth should be as manifold, majestic, and meaningful in our perspective as it is in this solemn declaration of the Christ: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matt. 12:28)

Professionalism and Partyism

We hear much these days about cancer research and all of us are asked to give money to such organizations as the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. It is probable, however, that only a few of us have heard of the Krebiozen Research Foundation and the work of Dr. Andrew C. Ivy. I have recently read some disturbing information of how Dr. Ivy and the Krebiozen officials have been discredited and abused by the American Medical Association in their attempt to test a new cancer drug. My source of information is the remarks of Honorable Roland Libonati of Illinois in the 86th Congressional Record. I also have a personal letter from Senator Paul Douglas in which he further explains the situation.

This is the story. Dr. Ivy and his associates under the sponsorship of Krebiozen Research Foundation have developed a new drug called krebiozen. Both Congressman Libonati and Senator Douglas are convinced that the testimonials resulting from the use of the drug indicate that it is far more successful than any other medication for cancer. Libonati in his report to congress mentioned that 500 physicians have used the drug upon their patients and have submitted reports to the Krebiozen Foundation describing step-by-step the progressive effects of krebiozen. He further states in his report: "There are presently 42 persons, two of whom are physicians, who are alive and free from cancer and who, as terminal cases, were sent home to die, and then received krebiozen and are now without a trace of cancerous tissue or growth." And again he tells his fellow statesmen: "There are also, at the present time, 64 other persons, two of whom are physicians, where their cancerous condition is in a state of arrestment and completely controlled, who also were terminal cases and sent home to die. It is certain that the truth always seeks out the liar."

Dr. Ivy and his staff are not quacks with some fanatical notion. The gentlemen of the congress speak of Ivy in their reports as "one of the greatest physiologists in the world" and himself a member of the American Medical Association. Senator Douglas speaks of his long acquaintance with him and testifies as to his integrity. So what is the problem? If a reputable physician has discovered a drug that may be the best treatment for cancer, why do the cancer societies not put their millions for research behind it? It is believed that the same pathetic story of professionalism and partyism, which has so often deterred man's physical and spiritual progress, is once again being repeated in this case.

Libonati is very outspoken in his criticism of the cancer societies who mouth sweet words about fighting cancer and then "use every effort to discourage, hamper, and belittle the one remedy that has proven itself." He argues that the cancer societies fear that they may lose some of their great power, that they have their own pet projects and do not want to lose donors to some other research effort. The societies, therefore, have issued a "background" paper on krebiozen in which they contend that the claims for it are false and that there is nothing to it.

Rep. Libonati feels that the medical and cancer associations are being criminal in their "vilification and persecution" of Dr. Ivy. Though they claim to follow the oath of Hippocrates by serving the needs of the

people rather than their own gratification, they deliberately hinder a successful freelance effort to combat one of man's deadliest enemies.

Senator Douglas feels that the cancen research societies, which are using millions of dollars appropriated by congress, owe it to the American people to give krebiozen a fair and impartial test. For reasons that seem to be technical and puzzling they refuse to do this. The senator wrote to me, "It has been difficult finding a basis on which Dr. Ivy and his associates and the officials of the National Cancer Institute could agree." One would think that the society would go out of its way to try anything that might prove to be the answer to one of man's greatest medical problems. Some feel that since it is not their discovery, and since it may eclipse the glory of their own ludicrous projects, that they refuse even to investigate the claims for it.

We are surely to hear more of this, for the Illinois representatives in congress are convinced that mankind is being done a grave injustice. Douglas informed me that a testimonial dinner was recently held in Chicago in honor of Dr. Ivy, that more money was raised, and that the battle for justice will continue.

To us laymen it seems unthinkable that professional men would put their own party before truth. Yet, as Senator Douglas states, "the organized medical profession disparaged the great discoveries of Pasteur, Lister and many other great path-breakers and sought to defame their characters." And is not the same true in religion? There is Huss, Wyckliffe, Luther, Savonarola, Campbell and Stone to mention only a few. It was the organized clergy that opposed what these men did. Billy Sunday used to slap his leg and cry out, "Don't forget that it was the clergy that killed Christ." He was right. We shouldn't forget. I shall always remember the reply a Harvard professor made to my question about what would happen to Jesus Christ if he should live among us. Without any hesitation the professor replied, "The religious leaders would kill him or perhaps imprison him."

Professionalism and partyism are deadly wherever they are found, whether in education, medicine, religion, science, or business. Mankind suffers when party is placed before principle. Our first American president in his Farewell Address warned against the party spirit in politics. It stands today as a great threat to our moral values. The docrine "the party right or wrong" is inherently evil. I was amazed to read in a news magazine recently that *statesmen* in Washington refused to approve a presidential appointee because they did not like the person! The vote turned out to be party against party, and there was a minimum of consideration given to the man's qualifications for the position. This is alarming in a day when America is responsible for moral leadership.

As for krebiozen as a cure for cancer, Senator Douglas is right when he says it should be rejected if it does not prove to be worthwhile. But he believes its advocates deserve a hearing. And this is true with any and every reasonable petition made in the search for truth. Some of the disciple

pioneers for religious truth plowed their fields with one hand and held a New Testiment in the other. This spirit of inquiry gained for them and the world great new truths. While the clergy once more frowned at them, they believed in the right to be heard—and they *were* heard!

In this connection it is in order to plead for that liberty that John Stuart Mill wrote about when he insisted that "if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility." I suggest you read Gerald Richard's article in this issue on *The Christian and the Great Ideas* in which the Mill quotation can be found.

When a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still in him. When a man is getting worse he understands his own badness less and less.—*C. S. Lewis*

Man differs from the animal only by a little. Most men throw that little away.—*Confucius*

If you want to find your brothers, find yourself.—*James Oppenheim*

If you want to find yourself, find your brothers.
—*Harry and Bonaro Overstreet*

Love is union with somebody, or something, *outside yourself,* under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of oneself. It is an experience of sharing, of communion, which permits the full unfolding of one's inner activities.—*Erich Fromm*

Strange stirrings of hope and expectation are moving across the world. It is possible that we may be at the fringe and frontier of a new and marvelous epoch.—*Rufus Jones*

THE AGE OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

By Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

When Alexander Campbell first arrived in the United States on September 29, 1809, he found a nation in a state of spectacular growth. The area of the country had almost doubled in the decade before his disembarkation in New York, the population had increased nearly 40 percent. Society was everywhere on the move. People were pressing restlessly into the west, seeking new homes on the ever receding frontier. And a growing fluidity of life was marked in the east as well. The old class distinctions were beginning to break down; the knee-breeches, ruffled shirts, cocked hats and wigs of the past were beginning to disappear. Democratizing forces, accumulating in the course of the 18th century, released during the War for Independence, renewed by the excitements of the election of 1800 and by the pull of westward expansion, were giving the nation new expectations and new values. Nor could anything hope to escape the democratizing process—not politics, nor literature, nor even religion itself.

The democratic mood was composed of many elements. Perhaps most basic was the new estimate, emerging over the last two centuries, of the worth and possibility of the ordinary individual, not only as a soul to be saved, but equally as a being deserving happiness during his passage on earth. From this new focus much else followed. A heightened faith in individual dignity was leading to the assertion of man's right to inquire and judge for himself. A heightened concern for the individual personality was leading to the conviction that "the pursuit of happiness" was a proper human goal. A heightened respect for individual enterprise was leading to the sense that the interests of all were best served by indulging the interests of each. A heightened faith in individual reason was leading to the growing commitment to the methods and objectives of natural science. The new individualism was, above all, rationalistic and optimistic: it expected the universe to be intelligible,

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and it expected it to be kind. If democracy was the politics of the new individualism, then humanitarianism was its ethics, capitalism its economics and science increasingly its cosmology.

Yet the democratic mood clashed with much of the past—not alone with the politics of George III and the economics of mercantilism but also with the theology of John Calvin. For, in its most severe form, Calvinism relentlessly challenged basic presuppositions of democratic individualism. Its belief in total depravity contradicted the new faith in natural reason. Its belief in foreordination, election and eternal punishment affronted the new humanitarian ideas of justice. Its belief in imputation and hereditary guilt was incompatible with the new faith in personal merit and demerit. Its belief in dogmatic theology conflicted with the new assertion of the right of private judgment. Its predisposition in favor of strict ecclesiastical discipline offended democratic notions of social organization. Above all, Calvinism pursued happiness in the next world, not in this, and for the Supreme Deity, not for vile and corrupt man. In an important sense Calvinism was both irrational and pessimistic: It did not expect the universe to conform to human notions of justice and reasonableness; nor did it expect man's travail, either now or hereafter, to be sweet and easy.

ii

The contrast between the old Calvinism and the new democratic individualism was bound to set up strains. It did so, and on fundamental levels. Young men and women, growing up in the new mood, found the old faith harder and harder to accept. It was not only that Calvinism was unreasonable; more important, perhaps, was the fact that it was unbearable. The demands it made, not just on human reason, but on the human sensibility, were too appalling to be endured. Consider for a moment the testimony of those born in the last years of the 18th century.

Horace Mann, born in 1796:

> "In the way in which they (the Calvinist doctrines) came to my youthful mind, a certain number of souls were to be forever lost, and nothing—not powers, nor principalities, nor man, nor angel, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nay, not God himself—could save them; for He had sworn before time was, to get eternal glory out of their eternal torment . . . Like all children, I believed what I was taught. To my vivid

imagination, a physical hell was a living reality, as much so as though I could have heard the shrieks of the tormented, or stretched out my hand to grasp their burning souls, in a vain endeavor for their rescue. Such a faith spread a pall of blackness over the whole heavens, shutting out every beautiful and glorious thing . . . Often on going to bed at night, did the objects of the day and the faces of friends give place to a vision of the awful throne, the inexorable Judge, and the hapless myriads, among whom I often seemed to see those whom I loved best; and there I wept and sobbed until Nature found that counterfeit repose in exhaustion."[1]

John A. Dix, born in 1798:

"I derived no agreeable impression whatever from these religious observances . . . My mother's affectionate teachings had implanted within me grains of devotion which time could not fail to bring forth and ripen. But her God never seemed to me the same Deity who was worshipped at the meeting-house. Hers was all goodness and mercy and pardoning love; while the other seemed to me a severe master, burning with anger at the impenitence of the human race."[2]

Catherine Beecher, born in 1800:

"I then felt I was created a miserable, helpless creature; that I and all my fellow-men were placed under a severe law which we were *naturally* unable to obey, and threatened with everlasting despair for violating *one* of its precepts."[3]

William H. Seward, born in 1801:

"The first mental anxiety which I recall was, manifestly, an effect of the fearful presentations of death and its consequences, so common in the sermons and exhortations of the clergy at that day . . . I often was watchful at night, through fear that if I should fall asleep I should awake in the consuming flame which was appointed as a discipline that allows no reformation . . . Reflecting upon this incident, it became an interesting study afterward, how constantly a decline of imaginary terrors in the future state of being attends the progress of mankind in natural science."[4]

A faith which had seemed stern common sense in an earlier century was now beginning to appear, in the words of the editor Joseph T. Buckingham, "a piece of gratuitous and unprofitable cruelty." "My whole mind rebelled against this teaching," said the young Benjamin F. Butler. "I could not and did not believe it." Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes argued that Calvinism, consistently accepted, could only end in madness. John Quincy Adams, hearing a minister quote Isaac Watt's view that men were more base and brutish than the beasts, reflected, "If Watts had said this on a weekday to any one of his parishioners, would he not have knocked him down? And how can that be taught as a solemn truth of religion, applicable to all mankind which, if said at any other time to any one individual, would be punishable as slander?" "God," it was Adams' creed, "will not suffer us to do evil, and then sentence us severly for what He has suffered us to do. My reason and my sense of justice will not yeild to any other creed than this."[5]

iii

The reason and the sense of justice of a whole generation were at stake. The emotions experienced by the Manns and Dixes, Catharine Beechers and Sewards, multiplied a thousandfold, could result only in an invincible distaste for the unacceptable doctrines. With this distaste there came in many cases a turning away from the churches themselves; for the insistence on maintaining the old dogma in its harshness as a qualification for membership was making communion increasingly difficult. The total number of communicants in 1800 was less than 400,000—an average of one for about every 14.5 persons in the country (as compared to one for every 1.6 persons claimed today).[6] The very incidence of revivalism was itself a symptom of a situation where people combined a great anxiety to believe with a great inability to accept prevailing doctrine. The characteristic cycle from spiritual "deadness" to revivalist ecstasy to "backsliding" revealed a condition of apathy, occasionally energized by guilt into a frenzy of belief, but soon relapsing into the original indifference.

In such conditions, it was inevitable that people imbued with the democratic spirit should begin to revise the unacceptable doctrines in accordance with the new standards of justice and reasonableness. It was inevitable too that they should rebel against authoritarian forms of church polity. As Americans had already declared independence in politics, so at the end of the 18th and start of the 19th centuries Americans began to declare independence in religion. And, as the attempt to narrow the gap between political theory and the people had produced an extraordinary burst of political creativity, so the attempt to narrow the gap between theology and the people now brought about a great release of invention and energy in the field of religion.

The democratic impulse emphasized individual judgment and individual initiative. It was this impulse, for example, whch led young Barton Warren Stone in the late 1790's to revolt against the severe Presbyterian of his youth. The Presbyterian God professed great love for His children, Stone said, but then gave them commands which could not be obeyed and punished them for disobedience; such a God, he wrote, "no rational creature can love or honor"; "what man acting thus would not be despised as a monster, or demon in human shape, and be hissed from all respectable society?" If rational man were the measure of God, then Calvinism had to be rejected. As Stone later put it, "Calvinism is among the heaviest clogs on Christianity in the world. It is a dark mountain between heaven and earth, and is among the most discouraging hindrances to sinners from seeking the kingdom of God."[7] And, where the democratic impulse moved Stone to challenge dogma, it led a young Methodist minister, James O'Kelley, to challenge polity. Rising against the episcopal organization of Methodism, O'Kelly formed a new group whose name testified to its character. They called themselves "Republican Methodists," a plain assestion that the church was as necessary a field for republicanization as society itself.

iv

Stone and O'Kelly were only two of many men responding to the tensions between Calvinism and democracy by new religious departures; but they were men whose experiments were especially relevant, of course, to the story of Alexander Campbell. When Campbell himself arrived in America a few years later, he found the democratizing process even further advanced. And he himself had already in his native Scotland begun to respond to the same tensions between Calvinism and the new spirit—a fact which should caution those too easily inclined to interpret the rise of the Christian Churches as the by-product of relgion on the frontier. Long before he ever saw the American wilderness, Campbell's recoil from the ecclesiastical organization of the Scottish Presbyterians had given him a belief in independency in church polity. And the spreading faith in human capacity—as vital in Britain and France as in Kentucky and Tennessee—had already raised doubts in his mind concerning the rigid fatalism of the older Calvinism.

Yet Campbell was also uneasily aware that the surge toward private judgment in dogma and independency in organization was creating problems. In particular, these tendencies had accelerated a rush toward sectarianism which obviously conflicted with the universalist aspirations of Christianity. Alexander Campbell and his father, reared in the intense atmosphere of Scottish theological disputation, with Seceders, Burghers, Anti-Burghers, Old Light Burghers, New Light Burghers and all the rest, had a peculiar detestation for what Thomas Campbell called "the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit." When they came to America, they found that their remarks on this theme provoked a heartening response. For their dislike of what they called "partyism" in religion had much in common with George Washington's warning in his Farewell Address against the "baneful effects of the spirit of party" in politics. Division among Christians, said Campbell's Declaration and Address of the Christian Association, was "a horrid evil," anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, anti-natural, "productive of confusion and of every evil work."[8] When the Campbells proposed to bring peace and unity to religion, they expressed aspirations highly congenial to the new democratic faith which, for all its individualism, nonetheless conceived society as uniform and homogeneous. "The appearance of party is a beacon proclaiming a tendency, which instantly alarms despotism," John Taylor of Caroline had said. "... General, and not party opinion, is the principle of our policy."[9]

The Campbells thus confronted a dilemma on their arrival in the United States. On the one hand, the old religion had lost much of its relevance to people's needs and hopes; on the other, agitated attempts to restore that relevance had produced only a confusion of clamoring sects. The need was plainly to restate the Christian faith in terms which would appeal to people's sense of reason and justice, as Calvinism no longer did—but, at the same time, to do this in a way which, instead of promoting partyism, might provide even a stronger basis for Christian unity than the Westminster Confession. It was to this great task that the Campbells now dedicated themselves.

v

What did the new democratic spirit seek of theology? Against the old belief in abstruse and complex doctrine, it insisted on sim-

plicity and intelligibility. Against the old belief in dogmatic and binding creeds, it affirmed the right of private judgment. It wanted a God of mercy, not a God of wrath; and it saw the individual, not as a helpless instrument of unpredictable divine grace, but as a man capable of making his own contribution toward salvation. And, while in the last resort it gave priority to the right of private judgment, it still yearned for a rebirth of Christian unity.

The Campbells expressed this democratic spirit with great fidelity. Though the elder Campbell's health had been the immediate reason for their migration to the United States, the decision came in an atmosphere when many of their fellow-countrymen, confronting dispirting economic and political prospects in Scotland, were avowedly seeking better opportunities in the American democracy. After seven years in the Unted States Alexander Campbell wrote a relative in Scotland, "I cannot speak too highly of the advantages that the people in this country enjoy in being delivered from a proud and lordly aristocracy; and here it becomes very easy to trace the common national evils of all European countries to their proper source, and chiefly to that first germ of oppression, of civil and religious tyranny . . . I would not exchange the honor and privilege of being an American citizen for the position of your king."[10]

The nature of their audience confirmed their democratic convictions. Addressing predominantly Scotch-Irish congregations in western Pennsylvania and western Virginia, they were appealing to the hardy and self-reliant small farmers, shopkeepers and workers whose aspirations would help bring about the Jacksonian revolution. "The chief priests, the scribes and the rulers of the people are generally in league against us," wrote Campbell almost in Jacksonian terms, recalling his tours of the eighteen twenties. As late as 1839, describing his communicants in the South, he wrote, "We have a few educated intelligent men, as we have a few rich and powerful; but the majority are poor, ignorant and uneducated."[11]

Why had religion lost contact with the rising democracy? One trouble, the Campbells felt, was the extent to which essential religion had been overlaid through the centuries with man-made speculation. The substitution of creeds for faith, as they saw it, was the source of authoritarianism, of factionalism and of unintelligibility. Soon after coming to America, Thomas Campbell protested against "the introduction of human opinions and human inventions into the

faith and worship of the Church"; and Alexander Campbell repeatedly deprecated "the unauthorized though consecrated jargon on trinity, unity, atonement, sacrifice, etc., etc.," The only sure footing the Campbells could discern in this tumult of dogma was the Bible itself; thus Thomas Campbell's dictum: "Where the Scripture speaks, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." And Scriptures meant, above all, the New Testament. "Outside of the apostolic canon," said Alexander Campbell, "there is not, as it appears to me, one solid foot of terra firma on which to raise the superstructure ecclesiastic." "We neither advocate," he said on another occasion, "Calvinism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Arianism, Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, Deism nor Sectarianism, but *New Testamentism.*"[12]

In these terms they sought to clear away the sophistications which encrusted the biblical faith and to uncover an unassailable basis for Christian unity in New Testament primitivism. This attack on the obfuscations of theology had certain resemblances to the contemporary attacks of Jacksonian reformers on the obfuscations of the common law. As codification would reduce the authority of judges and introduce stability into law, so New Testamentism would reduce the authority of ministers and introduce stability into religion. In each case there was a desire to render the subject accessible to the common man and thus to cut the ground from under the privileged class—whether of priests or of judges—who had held power through their vested interests in obscurity.

Nor was this search for definiteness incompatible with the right of private judgment; it was, indeed, the process which validated that right. The essential distinction was between "faith"—that is, "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible"—and "opinion." "While we earnestly contend for the faith," said Alexander Campbell, "to allow perfect freedom of opinion and of the expression of opinion, is the true philosophy of church union and the sovereign antidote against heresy." Men, in other words, should "leave the conscience free where God has left it free." On occasion, he made the comparison with republican society explicit. "Civil rulers have no right to tolerate or punish men on account of their opinions in matters of religion. Neither have Christians a right to condemn their brethren for difference of opinion." Little could be worse than insistence on dogma. "When men make communion in religious

worship dependent on uniformity of opinion," Campbell said, "they make self-love, instead of the love of God, the bond of union."[13]

vi

In this manner, Campbell sought to make faith more intelligible and more definite, providing a basis for unity while at the same time strengthening the right of private judgment. But the simplification of faith was only part of the process of democratization. Another part was the humanization of faith—the transformation of Christianity from a hopeless contest between a severe and all-powerful Deity and corrupt and impotent man to a constructive collaboration between rational man and a solicitous God.

This process of humanization had many aspects. Thus the fall of man lost for Campbell its decisive importance in the divine economy; original sin became a chronic human tendency rather than a state of total and constitutional depravity. The atonement now proceeded out of the mercy of God rather than out of His offended sense of justice. God himself somewhat receded in Campbell's scheme, and Christ assumed a new and central significance. When Campbell spoke of Christian unity, he meant without derogation to God, unity around Christ—"Christ alone being the *head,* the centre; his word the *rule,* and explicit belief of and manifest conformity to it in all things, the *terms.*" Or, as Isaac Errett summed it up, "We therefore urge the Word of God against human creeds; faith in Christ against faith in systems of theology; obedience to Christ rather than obedience to church authority; the Church of Christ in place of sects."[14]

The orientation of faith around Christ expressed the shift in interest from sin to salvation. Perhaps the most striking of Campbell's theological innovations (or, as he would have said, "restorations") was his reconsideration of the processes of salvation. This reconsideration revolved particularly around the meaning of baptism—the question which entangled Campbell in some of his sharpest controversies and which, as much as any other, compelled him against his first inclination to found a communion of his own. The problem of baptism had many aspects. Much of the controversy—for example, the argument about "sprinkling" versus "immersion"—followed from Campbell's effort to perform the baptismal rite as closely as possible in the manner of the primitive church.

But the aspect of baptism relevant here was Campbell's reinterpretation of the rite in terms which gave new scope in the pursuit of salvation to human initiative and human self-esteem.

For the older Calvinists, acceptance into communion required an unmistakable and convulsive religious experience. The pretense or illusion of belief was not enough, for sinners were by definition incapable of authentic belief; they required first a shattering sense of illumination by the spirit of God—an experience of physical reconstitution and regeneration which alone could make faith possible. For many who believe in God, the failure to have such a conclusive verification of faith was the cause of great guilt and tribulation. Barton W. Stone, recalling his youthful search for regeneration, later wrote, "For one year I was tossed on the waves of uncertainty—laboring, praying, and striving to obtain saving faith—sometimes desponding, and almost desparing of ever getting it." When preachers "labored to arouse me from my torpor by the terrors of God, and the horrors of hell," Stone could only sink into "an indescribable apathy."[15] Indeed, the demand for a prolonged inner upheaval as a prerequisite to conversion was an important factor in producing the contagion of religious apathy at the end of the 18th century.

vii

If a man felt he believed in God and wanted to join a church but still could not achieve the experience of regeneration, either he was condemned to the cycle of anguish and apathy, or else he might attempt a personal break-through of his own to faith. Thus Stone at last found resolution by yeilding to the non-Calvinist conviction that God was love, that Christ had come to seek and save the lost. "I now saw," he wrote, "that a poor sinner was as much authorized to believe in Jesus at first, as at last"—as much at the beginning of hte process of conversion, that is, as at the end—"that *now* was the accepted time, and day of salvation."[16]

Alexander Campbell himself had come to religion in Scotland in a similar manner. After a period of struggle, he was enabled to put his trust in the Saviour and feel his reliance on Him: "it never entered into my head," he later wrote, "to investigate the subject of baptism or the doctrines of the creed."[17] In the United States, like Stone, he now vigorously condemned the thesis that protracted in-

ternal agony was a condition precedent to the capacity for faith. He sharply rejected the view, as he put it, "that a sinner is so dead and buried in his sin that, even after he has heard the voice of God, speaking by Apostles and Prophets, he must wait still for the Spirit to descend and work faith in his heart by a supernatural process before he attempts even to call upon the name of the Lord."[18] For Campbell—and for the primitive church, as he read Scriptures—faith simply meant belief in testimony. If a person accepted the evidence of Scriptures, if he confessed his faith in Christ, he qualified, without further ado, for communion and salvation. His own decision was essential; he did not have to wait in torment for the visitation of the Holy Spirit. In short, Campbell regarded faith, repentance, baptism and the remission of sins as possible *before* the regeneration wrought by the Holy Spirit; while, for the older Calvinists, nothing was possible until *after* the months of questioning, doubt, terror and the final illumination.

What Campbell, Stone and the others thus contended was that even sinners were capable of believing the testimony of the Bible, of acting upon it, of coming to Christ, of obeying Him, and then of obtaining from Him salvation and the Holy Spirit. Against this view, Calvinism, in Campbell's judgment, divested "man of every attribute that renders him accountable to his Maker, and assimilates all his actions to the bending of the trees or the tumults of the ocean occasioned by the tempest." As Stone later wrote, "When we first began to preach these things, the people appeared as just awakened from the sleep of ages—then seemed to see for the first time that they were responsible beings." *Human responsibility* was the key. Men were no longer impotent before God: they could do things of their own initiative to bring themselves into the area of salvation, and they could do them forthwith. No one with access to Scriptures, Campbell said, had any excuse for unbelief and unregeneracy; "those who have put on the Lord Jesus are invited to abound in all the joys, consolations and purifying influences of this Holy Spirit."[19]

viii

The democratization of religion involved more than the simplification and humanization of theology. It also involved a reconsideration of the problems of church organization. Here again Campbell turned to the New Testament for guidance; but here again his proposals expressed the democratic temper of the times. The Christian Churches were growing as a result of self-organization and self-determination. Stone and his followers came to the new movement from the Presbyterians, the "Republican Methodists" from Methodism, others from Baptistism. Campbell and the Disciples offered a congregational polity on democratic lines, in which each church was independent and each congregation chose and ordained its own officers. So mistrustful was he of ecclesiastical organization that, for a time, he objected to missionary, education and Bible societies and even to Sunday Schools.[20]

This mistrust carried over to the clergy itself. As the Jacksonian uprising had an anti-intellectual strain, leaving in its trail a scorn for lawyers and for scholars, so Campbell for many years had little use for the professional clergy. Preachers seemed to him a collection of clerical operators, raising people's admiration of themselves for their own advantage, scheming to make more money and gain more influence, committed to bigotry, sectarianism and obscurantism. "As a body of men," he wrote, "they have taken away the key of knowledge from the people." The Campbells could find nothing in Scriptures making a "high degree of doctrinal information necessary for salvation: "the Church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers." Alexander Campbell's own mission, as he saw it, was democratic and militant—it was "to take the New Testament out of the abuses of the clergy and put it into the hands of the people."[21]

There was in all this an element, as Henry Adams suggested, of calling on the church to "ignore what it could not comprehend," as if intellectual difficulties must be nonessential because they were insuperable.[22] But Jacksonian Democracy, while resenting what seemed to it the arrogance of the educated, placed a high value on education itself. So too did Campbell, who fought for many years for the principle of free public education and set up a school of his own, Buffalo Seminary, as early as 1818. Bethany College, which honors me today, has remained, of course, the great monument to Alexander Campbell's faith in education. Campbell's growing concern for education and, in time, even for a trained ministry resulted no doubt in part from the needs of the Christian

Churches, as soon as they were established as a separate denomination; it resulted too perhaps from the rising social status and expectations of the members of the Christian movement. But it testified more basically to Campbell's own deep faith in education as—in his words of 1853—"one of the chief bulwarks of religion, morality, and representative government."[23]

Yet his eventual acceptance of a professional clergy did not diminish his abhorrence for the whole idea of the clergy as a privileged group or for the notion of established churches.* He praised the United States as "a country happily exempted from the baneful influence of a civil establishment of any peculiar form of Christianity." When Ezra Stiles Ely, a Presbyterian minister, proposed *"a Christian party in politics,"* Campbell denounced him; and he strongly supported Richard M. Johnson's report rejecting the Sabbatarian attempt to stop the Sunday mails—so strongly, indeed, as to give rise to an unsubstantiated tradition that he was the report's author. Though Campbell carried his belief in the separation of church and state to the point of virtually ignoring the politics of the day ("I know of nothing more antipodal to the gospel than politics"), he was nonetheless expressing a predominant Jacksonian mood in his opposition to the political presumptions of the churches.[24]

The problems of the millennial enthusiasms of the day require further study; but no one can doubt a relationship between social conditions and the millennial dream. A belief in the millennium has been a characteristic faith of the disinherited. In certain respects, the establishment of utopian communities in the United States in these years represented a secularization of the millennial hope. Though Campbell himself was always a cautious millenarian, nonetheless he named his magazine the *Millennial Harbinger* and plainly believed that the millennium was impending. The millennium, he declared in 1841, "will be a state of greatly enlarged and continous prosperity, in which the Lord will be exalted and his divine spirit enjoyed in an unprecedented measure. All the conditions of society will be vastly improved; wars shall cease, and peace and

* *Restoration Review* takes exception to the statement that Campbell eventually accepted a professional clergy. While Prof. Schlesinger reveals penetrating insight into Campbell and the age that produced him, we feel that he here misinterprets him. The evidence will show that while the sage of Bethany softened in his caustic judgments of the clergy, he never recognized a professional clergy.—Editor

good will among men will generally abound . . . Crimes and punishments will cease; governments will recognize human rights . . . The seasons will become more mild; climates more salubrious, health more vigorous, labor less, lands more fertile, and the animal creation more prolific."[25] The very language is reminiscent of contemporary predictions of Albert Brisbane and other disciples of Fourier.

ix

If Campbell expressed many of the aspirations of American democracy in the Jacksonian period, he expressed too his share of its confusions. His most conspicuous failure perhaps was his hesitation to come to grips with the moral challenge of slavery. While he was nominally in favor of abolition and had a vivid sense of the demoralizing consequences of the slavery system, he nonetheless could see no Christian reason to affirm the evil of slaveholding. Slavery, he lamely concluded, was inexpedient but not immoral. This equivocation may have been prompted in part by the explosive character of the issue for a church with many members in slave territory. But perhaps it came more profundly from his reluctance to apply Christianity to any social or political problems.[26]

Campbell's long campaign against the Roman Catholic Church expressed another of the less appealing aspects of the mass democracy of the day. While Campbell refrained on the whole from the cheap anti-Catholicism of the Know-Nothing type, he denounced Catholicism as "essentially anti-American, being opposed to the genius of all free institutions, and positively subversive of them."[27] Actually his own theology, with its emphasis on freedom of opinion, offered a formula for religious pluralism in America. Campbell underestimated the extent to which a vital pluralism could absorb even a faith with the universalist aspirations of Roman Catholicism.

These lapses of clear-sightedness were perhaps part of the somewhat literal and legalistic cast of mind which Campbell sometimes brought to religion—and here again he was typical of tendencies in the democracy of his time. Tocqueville, visiting America in the eighteen thirties, observed that the language of the law had become in some measure a vulgar tongue; "the spirit of the law, which is produced in the schools and courts of justice, gradually penetrates beyond their walls into the bosom of society,

where it descends to the lowest classes, so that at last the whole people contract the habits and the tastes of the judicial magistrate."[28] Campbell's effort to solve all problems by invoking the words of the New Testament with the naive belief that these words required no particular interpretation encouraged a verbalistic attention to the letter of the law, sometimes—as in the case of slavery—at the clear expense of the spirit. And, as Dr. Lunger has pointed out, Campbell concentrated on the Acts and Epistles rather than on the Gospels and the Sermon on the Mount. This emphasis further deprived his faith of the prophetic quality—the sense of tension between history and eternity—responsible for the more penetrating moral insights.

Yet Campbell, in his very lack of irony and tragedy, was once again faithful to the democratic mood of his times. These were days of expansion and hope, and they required a reinterpretation of religion. The sterile and mechanical pessimism of the older Calvinism, while retaining the language of tragedy, did not have, in any high sense, the tragic spirit; it was without the vitality to adjust to the new age. A group of religious pioneers attempted the exercise in adjustment. Because they were men of moral sensitivity and religious devotion, they sought earnestly to preserve the essense of the Christian tradition as they understood it. Because they loved their nation and their fellow-Americans, and because they believed profoundly in human dignity and reason, they sought to have religion recognize the capacities and aspirations of the people. Among these men, Alexander Campbell, by his high-mindedness, his generosity and his serenity, occupies a leading place. His theology and his life display his success in accommodating religion to the spirit of the times while keeping the sense of vantage-points beyond history without which religion would lose its meaning.

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1 Mary P. Mann, *Life of Horace Mann* (Boston, 1865), 13-15.
2 John A. Dix, *Memoirs*, Morgan Dix, comp. (New York, 1883), 15, 17.
3 Catharine Beecher to Lyman Beecher, January 1, 1823, Lyman Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc.* (New York, 1864), I, 497.
4 F. W. Seward, *Autobiography of William H. Seward, from* 1801 *to* 1834. *With a Memoir of His Life* (New York, 1877), 22-23.
5 Joseph T. Buckingham, *Personal Memoirs and Recollections of Editorial Life* (Boston, 1852), I, 17; B. F. Butler, *Butler's Book* (Boston, 1892), 61; J. T. Morse, Jr., *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (Cambridge, 1896), I, 269-270; J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, C. F. Adams, ed. (Philadelphia, 1877), VII, 268-269, IX, 340.
6 Daniel Dorchester, *Problem of Religious Progress* (New York, 1881), 540-545. For contemporary estimates, see, for example, *Dr. George Gallup's* 1956 *Pocket Almanac of Facts* (New York, 1955), 70. Two points should be made, however, about these statistice. In the first place, all religious statistics are unreliable; and, in the second place, the statistics of 1790 were based on actual communicants, while contemporary statistics are generally based on loose definitions, including, for example, baptized infants as church members.

7 *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself* in Rhodes Thompson, ed., *Notes from Cane Ridge* (St. Louis, 1954), 63-64.
8 Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Philadelphia, 1869), I, 243, 260-261.
9 John taylor, *An Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* (New Haven, 1950), 497, 498.
01 Richardson, *Campbell*, I. 81, 465-466.
11 Richardson, *Campbell*, II, 452, 453.
12 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 227, 236, II, 63, 482, 495.
13 Richardson, *Campbell*, II, 133, 224, 478, 519.
14 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 255; Isaac Errett, "Our Position," quoted by B. B. Tyler, *A History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York, 1894), 123-124.
15 Stone, *Biography*, 39-40.
16 Stone, *Biography*, 40.
17 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 49.
18 Quoted by H. Van Kirk, *A History of the Theology of the Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis, 1907), 69.
19 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 426-427, II, 112-113, 124, 163, 208-209, 358-359; Stone, *Biography*, 75.
20 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 386, II, 57.
21 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 260, II, 27, 55-56.
22 Henry Adams, *History of the United States During the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (New York, 1889-1890), IX, 185-186.
23 H. L. Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis, 1954), 168.
24 Richardson, *Campbell*, I, 253; see also Lunger, *Political Ethics of Campbell*, chs. 3, 4; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson*, (Boston, 1945), chs. 11, 27. Dr. Lunger points out that Campbell did not carry his belief in separation to the point of objecting to the establishment in his home of a post office bringing with it certain franking privileges.
25 Lunger, *Political Ethics of Campbell*, 55.
26 Richardson, *Campbell*, II, 531; Lunger, *Political Ethics*, ch. 13.
27 Lunger, *Political Ethics*, 157.
28 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Vintage edition), I, 290.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

by Vance Carruth

I. A PRELIMINARY PREMISE DEFINED

A. Variability of Accountability

1. For our purposes "accountability" shall be considered largely synonymous with "responsibility" and has to do with the response which God requires from the individual.

2. That the response which God requires of people varies greatly from person to person is so generally accepted as to be practically axiomatic. This principle of variability is also affirmed Biblically in numerous instances, of which two of the more familiar are the Widow's Mite[1] and the Parable of the Talents[2]. In the case of former, Jesus states that the poor widow cast in more than did anyone else, not from the standpoint of literal quantity, but from the standpoint of capacitive ratio. In the case of the latter, a sum of money was given to each servant "according to his several ability," i.e., according to his individual capacity (idian dunamin), and his consequent accomplishment was expected to be analogously proportionate.

3. It is in connection with such thoughts as these that we have often said, "God does not require the impossible of anyone." This same universal principle is used by Paul in teaching relative to material liberality when he substantiates his point by saying, "it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not."[3] This basic theorem necessarily inheres in the concept of justice, that no man can be expected to do what he cannot do.

B. Elements of Variability relative to Individual Capacity

1. Inherent and developed mental capacity
2. Inherent and developed physical capacity

Vance Carruth was until recently on the administrative staff of a "Church of Christ" college. He requested that this essay not be published until he were no longer connected with the college. This is a daring and revolutionary piece of work for one within the "Church of Christ" environment, but the kind of thinking that will once more make us free men in Christ. I think I know that no professor of these "Church of Christ" institutions can talk as Mr. Carruth does and find favor with his superiors. He here uses the kind of pen that brings freedom to enslaved men.—Editor

1 Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4 (A.S.V.).
2 Matthew 25:14-30 (A.S.V.).
3 IICorinthians 8:12 (A.S.V.).

3. Inherent and developed emotional capacity
4. Opportunity
5. Experience, culture, previous teaching and training

II. THE PREMISE ILLUSTRATE AND APPLIED

Having seen that a person's accountability is predicated upon the basic factor of capacity, and that this capacity varies greatly from person to person, it now remains to examine the elements which are responsible for this individual variance.

A. Inherent and developed mental capacity

1. This, of course, has to do with the IQ. As a fundamental and deliberately elementary application of this capabilitive integrant, consider God's emphatic requirement of faith, without which it is impossible to please him[1], and damnation is to be the consequence[2]; and his command that all men everywhere repent[3]; and his condemnation of those who do not know him and who do not obey the gospel[4]. Yet, it is generally agreed that the idiot does not have to believe, repent, or know God. Why not? Because he cannot. How can this excuse him? Only in view of the premise that God does not require the impossible of anyone; that no one is required to do what he cannot do; and that the response of any person to any requirement can only be in ratio to his capacity. There are two boys, each fifteen years of age. One has an IQ of thirty, the other has an IQ of one hundred thirty. The first, we agree, does not even have to believe, know anything about God, etc.; the last, other factors being favorable, is required to do much more. Thus it is essentially avowed that, though God may be considered as absolute, his requirements of man cannot be, but are necessarily relative to the principle of variable accountability.

2. But between the mind which has no IQ and the mind which has a very high IQ, there are many degrees, so that the individual intellect might be considered as chartable somewhere on the following scale:

— *inherent and developed mental capacity* +

3. It should be understood that this observation is not con-

1 Hebrews 11:6 (A.S.V.).
2 Mark 16:16 (A.S.V.).
3 Acts 17:30 (A.S.V.).
4 II Thessalonians 1:8 (A.S.V.).

sidered applicable to the person who, through deliberate sin, drives himself into a state of mental defectiveness. This same reservation of application must obtain in the ratios yet to be listed as well. Jesus offers little hope to those who deliberately incapacitate themselves; those who stubbornly become blind followers of blind leaders. But in regard to those who are sincerely doing all they can, his attitude appears to be quite different. He says, to the self-righteous Pharisees, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth."[1] Had they been truly incapable of receiving his teaching, they would not have been charged with sin. But inasmuch as they were capable, and had intentionally closed their eyes to Jesus, they were held accountable. Commenting upon this passage, Albert Barnes said, "This passage teaches conclusively that men are not condemned for what they cannot do."[2]

B. Inherent and developed physical capacity

1. That the person only capable of intravenous feeding could hardly be expected to partake of the Lord's Supper as do we; that the person who is deformed, spastic, paralytic, etc., could hardly be expected to sing or teach or work in the same manner as the strong, talented, eloquent, etc., is self-evident. Further, the psychologist recognizes the effect on basic personality of life-long illness, or life-long strength, and the variations between them.

2. But between the body which has very little physical capacity and the body which has been generously endowed, there are many degrees, so that the individual physical attributes might be considered as chartable somewhere on the following scale:

— *inherent and developed physical capacity* +

C. Inherent and developed emotional capacity

1. There can be some overlapping and interrelation between categories, as is true in this specific division, for physical conditions can have a marked effect on emotional capacity. The physiologist finds himself still impressed with the vital connection between primary personality traits and such things as metabolism, glandular activity, chemical balance, etc.

2. Some parents have learned to their amazement that even

[1] John 9:41 (A.S.V.).
[2] Albert Barnes, *Commentary on the New Testament,* in loc.

small children near the same age living under almost identical circumstances in the same home can be poles apart in personality characteristics, affecting directly the nature of their response to any given stimulus.

3. But between two personalities that are so far apart that they are practically unrelated, there are many degrees, so that the individual emotional capacity might be considered as chartable somewhere on the following scale:

— *inherent and developed emotional capacity* +

D. Opportunity

1. While opportunity is not a determinant in regard to innate ability, it is a most important constituent insofar as practical or operational ability is concerned. Again, there are two boys, each fifteen years of age. But this time the IQ of each is the same, and other factors are equal, except for the matter of opportunity. One has been raised by animals in a jungle, and has never seen or heard of a human being. The other has been raised in a Christian home in America. The only difference between the boys is the matter of opportunity. But on the basis of the previously verified premise that God does not require the impossible of anyone, the respective requirements of the two would not be expected to be the same.

2. Paul wrote, "where there is no law, neither is there transgression."[1] Also, "sin is not imputed when there is no law."[2] But inasmuch as man cannot live without some "code" of conduct, those living where there is no opportunity to do otherwise automatically create a code of their own, which code becomes their standard of judgment.[3] "But if this is true, why spend money trying to send the gospel of Christ to those who might be saved without it?" For one reason, because no self-created law could ever compare with the glory and majesty, nor could it ever hope to bring about the spiritual maturation, of the beautiful gospel of Jesus Christ. We also spend thousands of dollars each year here in America edifying those who have already heard the gospel and accepted it, in our recognition of this principle of the value of spiritual maturation.

3. But between "no opportunity" and "every opportunity"

[1] Romans 4:15 (A.S.V.).
[2] Romans 5:13 (A.S.V.).
[3] Romans 2:14 (A.S.V.).

there are many degrees, so that the individual opportunitive capacity might be considered as chartable somewhere on the following scale:

— *opportunity* +

E. Experience, culture, and previous teaching and training

1. The experiences through which one passes, the cultures with which one is associated, and the previous teaching to which one has been exposed, affect a person's capacity to respond to any given challenge. A man does not likely ever divorce himself entirely from his culture, nor is he really independent. Unless I am too prejudiced to admit it, I must realize that if I had been born and reared in, and still living in, a rigid and isolated Mohammedan culture in some Asian outpost, that I would likely be a Mohammedan today. Conversely, if the hypothetical Mohammedan whose place I have herein taken had been born and reared in, and still was living in, my place and circumstances, he would likely be, all other things being equal, a Christian today. Only a just God, who judges on the basis of individual rather than circumstantial attainment, is able to balance all variants judicially and judge accordingly.

2. It is written, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."[1] Many children, reared in Christian homes, have believed in the gospel of Christ ever since they were three years old. Why were they not then baptized? Some of that age have even asked to be. "But they are not old enough to understand." Or, "They haven't sinned yet." Some of them have disobeyed their parents. Isn't that supposed to be a sin? "But they don't understand sin yet." Has it never occurred to some of us that such statements are an admission that even so basic a doctrine as baptism can be legitimately modified on the basis of human understanding, when such lack of understanding is not the fault of the one lacking? It is "special pleading" to apply a principle to one case and then refuse to apply it to cases which are parallel. The thoughtful realize that some, because of previous experiences, teaching, cultural factors, personality components, etc., are as totally incapable of responding favorably to a particular message as is one who has never heard it.

3. In this connection, Alexander Campbell wrote:

[1] Mark 16:16 (A.S.V.).

> Many a good man has been mistaken. Mistakes are to be regarded as culpable and as declarative of a corrupt heart only when they proceed from a wilful neglect of the means of knowing what is commanded. Ignorance is always a crime when it is voluntary; and innocent when it is involuntary . . . True, indeed, that it is always a misfortune to be ignorant of any thing in the Bible, and very generally it is criminal. But how many are there who cannot read; and of those who can read, how many are so deficient in education; and of those educated, how many are ruled by the authority of those whom they regard as superiors in knowledge and piety, that they never can escape out of the dust and smoke of their own chimney, where they happened to be born and educated![2]

4. Another pioneer, Moses E. Lard says, commenting upon Romans 1:20, "Paul here assumed the great and constantly recurring fact in the divine government that knowledge of duty is the measure of responsibility."[1] Then, commenting upon Romans 2:12, Lard says, "The measure of light they have, be it much or little, is their rule of life. By this they will stand or fall."[2]

5. One reason such elements have such an effect on one's capacity, is that man is inherently unable to think on any level except as he relates it to that which he already knows. If that which he already knows (or believes he knows) is inaccurate, his relation may also be inaccurate. "But I can think of a ghost, and I never saw one!" Then, describe your ghost. "Well, it is smoky, or like a fog, or vapor, etc." You see? On the basis of smoke, or fog, or vapor, or some other thing with which the mind is already familiar, a relation is established from which the mind attempts to move to other perspectives. This intrinsic mental limitation must not be lost sight of in considering the effect of previous teaching, experience, culture, etc., on the individual capacity.

6. Even in cases where ignorance is only relatively involuntary, there is possibly an accountability variant. On what other foundation can we account for the statement of Jesus that in the judgment it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, than for those who rejected his teachings?[3]

7. Only on this base of experience, culture, and previous teaching and training, can we appreciate the significance of the remark

[2] Alexander Campbell, Lunenburg Letter, 1837.
[1] Moses E. Land, Commentary on Romans, Standard Publishing Co., in loc.
[2] Moses E. Lard, Commentary on Romans, Standard Publishing Co., in loc.
[3] Matthew 10:15; 11:24; Luke 10:12, 14; Matthew 11:22 (A.S.V.).

Jesus made to the apostles, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."[4] Notice: ye CANNOT BEAR (do not have the power to understand). Was the difficulty here due to a lack of IQ, or lack of opportunity for Jesus to talk to them at that time? The answer is obvious. Problems of experience, culture, and previous teaching and training had limited their capacity to understand at that particular time.

8. But between the person in whose life these elements have combined to make him completely receptive and the person in whose life these elements have combined to make him incapable of reception, there are many degrees, so that the individual cultural capacity might be considered as chartable somewhere on the following scale:

— *experience, culture, and previous teaching and training* +

III. RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS

A. A multiplicity of variables

1. All the foregoing relative scales blend in varying combinations in every individual, to form a total accountability scale as follows:

— *personal accountability* +

2. Then, a separate total accountability scale would likely be required for each specific act, or thought, or feeling, or requirement, etc., in view of the non-linearity of our capacity to respond in the same way to variant stimuli.

3. There are only a few primary colors, but think of the many tints, hues, shades, and shadows, possible with different blends. When we meditate upon the five elements of variability already discussed (and possible others which we have not discussed), and consider the many gradations into which each may be sub-divided, then blended into varying combinations from person to person, the postulate that no two people are exactly alike takes on added credibility. As a result,

a. we should be less inclined to be judgmental toward others, and

b. we should have greater appreciation for the omniscience

[4] John 16:12 (A.S.V.).

of God, who alone can know what is required of each individual in each case under every circumstance.

4. Also to be recognized is the fact that where total capacity is nearly the same in several different people, the individual response and action may still vary due to other variants not herein considered, and that God may still reward or punish proportionately in some instances. This seems to be the primary distinction between the Parable of the Talents referred to earlier, and the Parable of the Pounds.[1] In the Parable of the Talents, the money was distributed according to the "several ability" (individual capacity) of each. Apparently, in the Parable of the Pounds, equal capacity exists, and each servant receives the same amount (one pound). The first, with one pound, gains ten. He is commended, and rewarded. The second, with one pound, gains five. He is NOT commended, but is still rewarded in proportion. The third, with one pound gains nothing and is condemned. Having offered this suggestion, we must leave this particular observation, for further pursuance would involve questions of degrees of reward and punishment, which are outside the scope of this discussion.

5. It is easily seen that the whole matter under discussion in this paper relates itself closely to the grand themes of the grace, mercy, love, and clemency of God, concerning each of which many good books have been written, and which we cannot hope to deal with in detail in so short a writing as this.

B. Psychological repercussions

Such a philosophy as deduced from the foregoing strikes hard against proud dogmatism and legalistic absolutism. This being true, it is psychologically difficult for some minds to grasp, due to the sense of security (and perhaps superiority) which absolutism affords. *The tendency to want to be able to pidgeon-hole everyone and everything, to fence off people and ideas into a certain proscribed area, to point confidently to a person or a doctrine and categorize it exactly with wholesale abandon, is probably not too far from most of us, since such precise cataloging gives us the feeling that we have everything and everyone under "control," and hence are secure.*

2. But be this as it may, Jesus taught no such absolutism of externals. We may think of God as absolute, and similarly the revela-

[1] Luke 19:13-27 (A.S.V.).

tion of himself in Jesus Christ, but all else must be ultimately relative. Thus, we should be humbled, reconciled to letting God be the judge, and ourselves made less self-secure, but much more Christ-secure!

3. Still, we need some way of determining whom we shall associate with and recognize as Christian brethren. How can this be done? Some attempt at assistance on this matter shall be made in the applications to follow.

IV. PERTINENT APPLICATIONS

A. Who is a Christian?

From the observations previously made it is seen that the questions: "Who is a Christian?" and "Who will be in heaven?" are not necessarily identical, unless one arbitrarily and perhaps rather illogically defines a Christian as anyone who will be in heaven (the faithful of the Old Testament, those who are unaccountable because of never having had a possible opportunity to hear the gospel, etc.).

2. What is likely the best definition of a Christian? The only Biblical definition is this: "and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."[1] So, a Christian is simply a disciple of Christ, and a disciple of Christ is a Christan. A disciple, of course, is a follower, a learner, a pupil. Thus Thayer defines a Christian (Christianos) as "a follower of Christ . . . a worshipper of Jesus."[2] Someone may ask, "Then, there were Christians before Pentecost of Acts Two?" Yes, in essence, though not in name, just as for the period of about ten years between Pentecost and the incident in Antioch there were no Christians in name, but certainly in essence.

3. This is substantially the characteristic thought along this line as held by the leaders of the Restoration Movement. Alexander Campbell deals with the question in these words:

> But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of this will.[1]

4. Campbell's definition is profound. Is not the person who thus believes and repents and obeys to the best of his knowledge, a follower of Jesus? And is not a follower a disciple, and a disciple a Christian? Also, from the standpoint of variable accountability, and the premise that God does not require the impossible of anyone, is it not adequate? If a man believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will, we ask, WHAT MORE CAN HE POSSIBLY DO THAN THAT? I have done no more than that, neither have you, nor is it possible for anyone else.

1 Acts 11:26 (A.S.V.).
2 Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T., in loc.
1 Alexander Campbell, *Mill. Har.*, Vol. 8, p. 411.

5. There are some objections to this definition.

a. "But some might not even know enough to believe." True, and in some cases, as has been previously considered, they might not be accountable, and who is to say that God might not show clemency or mercy in such instances, but still these would not likely be considered Christians if we follow the definitions given and the principle of Messiahship and Annointing which inheres in the word "Christ" (Christos).

b. "But then why should they be required to repent?" Repentance is simply a change of mind. It is given here to preclude the strictly intellectual acknowledgment which might say, "Yes, he's the Son of God, but what do I care?" To be a follower implies a favorable response toward, and so it is used here.

c. "But a person needs to know so much more." Just how much and how perfectly? And remember the principle: God doesn't require the impossible . . . and a man can't possibly do more than to the best of his knowledge. Certainly, if a man realizes he needs to know more and then deliberately refuses to learn more, he is not doing to the best of his knowledge, for his best knowledge here includes a knowledge of the need to know more. But if he does not realize his knowledge in regard to a particular item is imperfect, or that he needs to know more, it is not likely that he will go to great lengths to correct that which he already thinks is right. Among those who do know more than others, the amount, character, and quality of this knowledge may vary greatly from person to person.

6. That ignorance of some kinds and in certain instances does affect responsibility has been substantiated in the initial comments of variable accountability. It is further indicated in the following passages, for example.

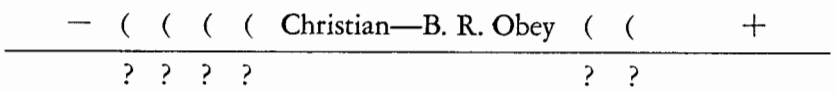
a. When James says, "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin,"[1] there naturally follows the strong implication that if, in some cases, a man did not know to do good, to him it might not be sin.

b. When Jesus prays for his crucifiers, he predicates his request for their forgiveness on the basis of the fact that they did not know what they were doing.[2]

c. When Paul avers his precedent conduct towards the church to have been one of blasphemy, persecution, and injury, he declares that the mercy he received was due to this prior misconduct being motivated through ignorance and unbelief.[1] (We shall not delve here into the differences between lack of obedience and disobedience, or between unbelief and disbelief, and the many degrees between them.)

B. What is the church of Christ?

1. In asking this question, we are thinking of the church in the universal, not in the local, sense. Where on the scale of the individual's accountability does his church membership begin and end, insofar as the Lord is concerned, and is the entrance line one of abrupt exactness, and absolute?



We may never be able to answer this question conclusively, but we can study it. If we think of the church as the people who are called out of the world (ecclesia) into fellowship with Christ; as the family of God; the assembly of saints; it is but natural to wonder where the border lines are. On the scale above, we have used parentheses to indicate these borders. The parenthesis on the right shall cause no great concern, since there is not likely to be any question as to whether or not those who are exceptionally accountable and have outstanding knowledge of Christ and have followed accordingly are in the church. In the center of the scale we have indicated the Christian—the person with sufficient capacity to believe, repent, and who is obeying the Lord according to his measure of knowledge of

[1] James 4:17 (A.S.V.).
[2] Luke 23:34 (A.S.V.).
[1] I Timothy 1:13 (A.S.V.).

his will. Starting from the left, some might wish to consider the church entrance border to be at the point of the first parenthesis, which we have arbitrarily placed at this point to indicate the mentally incompetent. But even though we can recognize such as being acceptable in the sight of God, there may be no great reason to consider them as members of the church. The second parenthesis might include those of slightly higher IQ, and perhaps the infants, but still below the level of faith capacity. The preceding observation would probable apply equally here. The third parenthesis indicates those whose IQ is adequate, but whose opportunities to know Christ as we do are limited, but who, nevertheless, are following whatever light is available to them. The fourth parenthesis is to indicate the Christian; the person who believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. If church membership begins here, it is a simple matter then to say that the church consists of all Christians, and all Christians are in the church. The fifth parenthesis from the left indicates those who have had sufficient knowledge to have some vague concept of baptism and have acted upon it. The sixth parenthesis from the left indicates those who had sufficient knowledge to have a clear concept of baptism and have acted upon it. (There are many degrees between all of these, of course.) Some want the church to begin here, and though admitting that the Christian begins at the fourth parenthesis, affirm that church membership, as such, does not begin until the fifth or sixth parenthesis.

3. Depending somewhat on which parenthesis we choose, if we must choose one, it generally follows that the question of getting into the church and getting into heaven are not exigencially identical.

4. Perhaps the best simple definition of the church we can suggest is this: the church is a spiritual body composed of all the people of God everywhere.

C. Are there Christians in denominations?

1. We will not labor to be definitive at this point, but simply accept the ordinary connotation of the word "denomination." That there are Christians among the religious sects is a fundamental concept of the Restoration Movement. This was the significance of the motto, "We do not claim to be the only Christians, but Christians

only." If the "Church of Christ" as commonly thought of today is a denomination, which will be considered in a few moments, there must be Christians in denominationalism or else there are none among us. If the definition of "Christian" as given earlier is sound, then the existence of Christians among the sects is unquestionable, for no one is likely to deny that among these groups there are those who believe in Christ, have repented, and are obeying him according to their measure of knowledge of his will. Nor will anyone likely assert that all among our own group do that. This would mean that not all Christians are in the "Church of Christ," and that not all in the "Church of Christ" are Christians.

2. After all, are not external acts means to an end, rather than an end within themselves? *Is not the purpose of Christianity to mold people in the image of Christ? If some should attain to this image even though their vision of some externals might be obscure, would not the same end thus be realized?* Again, this was the view of the Restoration. Alexander Campbell wrote:

> If there be no Christians in the Protestant sects, there are certainly none among the Romanists, none among the Jews, Turks, Pagans; and therefore no Christians in the world except ourselves, or such of us as keep, or strive to keep, all the commandments of Jesus. Therefore, for many centuries there has been no church of Christ, no Christians in the world; and the promises concerning the EVERLASTING kingdom of Messiah have failed, and the GATES OF HELL HAVE PREVAILED AGAINST HIS CHURCH! This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the sects . . . I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. "Salvation was of the Jews," acknowledged the Messiah; and yet he said of a foreigner, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a Syro-Phoenician, "I have not found so great faith—no, not in Israel." Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians . . . It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known . . . The case is this: When I see a person who would die for Christ; whose brotherly kindness, sympathy, and active benevolence know no bounds but his circumstances; whose seat in the Christian assembly is never empty; whose inward piety and devotion are attested by punctual obedience to every known duty; whose family is educated in the fear of the Lord; whose constant companion is the Bible: I say, when I see such a one ranked amongst heathen men and publicans, because he never happened to inquire, but always took it for granted that he had been scripturally baptized; and that, too, by one greatly destitute of all these public and private virtues, whose chief or exclusive recommendation is that he has been immersed, and that he holds a scriptural theory of the gospel: I feel no disposition to flatter such a one; but rather to disabuse him of his error. And while I would not lead the most excellent professor in any sect to disparage the least of all the commandments of Jesus, I would say to my immersed brother as Paul said to his Jewish brother who gloried in a system which he did not adorn: 'Sir, will not his uncircumcision, or unbaptism, be counted to him for baptism? and will he not condemn you, who, though having the literal and true baptism, yet dost transgress or neglect the statutes of your King?'[1]

3. Campbell had reference, in the last part of the quotation, to the reasoning of Paul wherein the apostle argued against Jewish legalism by taking the position that circumcision was both outward and inward, and that a sincere heart might attain the inward circumcision though never circumcised outwardly, whereas the boastful Jew, though circumcised outwardly, had never attained to the inward circumcision, so that he would be condemned, and the other man justified; so that the outward act was merely a means to an end, and if another achieved the end without the external act, it would be considered as equivalent, and thus acceptable.[2] The burden of the message was, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."[3] And, "we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter."[4] And, "for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."[5]

4. The two strongest points in the Jewish law of ritual, so far as the Pharisaic concept was concerned, were circumcision and the Sabbath.[6] All these externals were means to an end, not ends of themselves.

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1 Alexander Campbell, *Ibid.*
2 Romans 2:25-29 (A.S.V.).
3 Romans 8:14 (A.S.V.).
4 Romans 7:6 (A.S.V.).
5 II Corinthians 3:6 (A.S.V.).
6 Mark 2:27 (A.S.V.).

5. We must constantly guard against the attitude of the early disciples of Jesus who ran to him with the shocking news that they had found another also casting out demons, and "he followed not us." Jesus answered, "Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."[1] Then, to warn the disciples of the danger of "forbidding" such people, Jesus continues in the very next words and as part of the same statement, "And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."[2]

6. The pioneer spirit of tolerance is enjoined by David Lipscomb who said:

> So long as a man really desires to do right, to serve the Lord, to obey His commands, we cannot withdraw from him. We are willing to accept him as a brother, no matter how ignorant he may be, or how far short the perfect standard his life may fall due to this ignorance.
>
> We will maintain the truth, press the truth upon him, compromise not one word or iota of that truth, yet forbear with the ignorance, the weakness of our brother who is anxious but not yet able to see the truth. Why should I not when I fall so far short of the perfect knowledge myself? How do I know that the line beyond which ignorance damns is behind me and not before me? If I have no forbearance with his ignorance, how can I expect God to forbear with mine?
>
> So long then as a man exhibits a teachable disposition, is willing to hear, to learn and obey the truth of God, I care not how far he may be, how ignorant he is, I am willing to recognize him as a brother.[3]

D. A more elementary consideration

1. But let's move down to a level where there is likely to be even more agreement. For example, consider the First Christian Church (the conservative branch, if you wish), in which the members have subscribed to the same "first principles" as have we. *It is tragically interesting how some of us think we can divide on*

1 Mark 9.38-41 (A.S.V.).
2 Mark 9:42 (A.S.V.).
3 *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 17, April 22, 1875.

matters of cups, classes, orphan homes, sponsoring churches, premillenialism, etc., and that these groups are still "of us,," but the moment division comes over a missionary society or instrumental music, a "denomination" has been formed and is not "of us." Errors exist in all groups, even in "ours." On what principle of reasoning can we admit that First Christians are people of God, but a denomination, and then claim that we are also people of God, but a separate group from them, and yet NOT a denomination? Such reasoning is internally inconsistent. Further, our own divided state is making it increasingly difficult for us to appeal to people to come to the "Church of Christ" as the "True Church," for fear someone may ask the shattering question, "Which one of your many factions is 'The True Church'?"

2. The reason we used the First Christian church as illustrative of the principle in point is because many among us will at least admit that these people (i.e., the sincere members among them) can be considered Christians because they have been "baptized for the remission of sins!" But just how much would a person have to know about baptism in order for it to be valid? The same Peter who said to be baptized for the remission of sins added, in the very same verse, that baptism also was in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.[1] Yet there is great diversity of opinion among us as to exactly what this gift is, its significance, how and when it operates, etc., but we seem to agree that the baptism is valid even though we are confused on the point of the gift of the Holy Spirit accompanying it. Then, suppose I ask someone else, "Why were you baptized"?: He replies, "Because I think my Lord wanted me to be, and I want to do everything my Lord tells me." I continue, "But did you understand that the word 'for' in the King James translation of Acts 2:38 means 'in order to' and comes from a Greek word which so signifies?" He replies, "All I knew was that my Lord wanted me to be baptized, and I wanted to do everything he wanted me to do, and I was willing to trust him to take care of me in whatever way he saw fit." How could I draw a line of disfellowship against a person under these conditions? Suppose he had been led to believe that baptism was "because of" remission of sins, but still, he was baptized simply because he wanted to do whatever the Lord wanted him to do, re-

1 Acts 238 (A.S.V.).

gardless of this lack of understanding. Who can say that the Lord would refuse forgiveness to such a one just because he did not understand that baptism was for that purpose? Or, as has been brought out earlier, maybe he had been mistaught on what baptism was, or maybe he was never even able to hear of it. It is a rather interesting philosophy which teaches that Grace may operate in regard to a man's faith, in which there are certain imperfections, so that he does not really trust in the Lord as much as he ought to; or in regard to a man's repentance, in which there are certain limitations, so that he has not really turned away from material things as much as he ought to; or in regard to a man's confession, in which there are certain weak points, so that he does not always witness for Christ as fully as he could; etc.; and that Grace may take into consideration various factors and be merciful; but that this same Grace becomes inoperative if it comes to a matter of defection in baptism, instrumental music, missionary society endorsement, or denominational affiliation. It is significant to note that most of the information that we have concerning, for example, baptism (as in the sixth chapter of Romans), was written to people who had been baptized already, in order that they might understand it. It was not written to those who were about to be baptized. Yet, there was never any suggestion that those who had been baptized in the name of Christ must be bapitzed again because they didn't understand enough, or that they must not be fellowshipped by those who understood it better.

3. Another giant of the Restoration Movement, Barton W. Stone, has this to say:

> But says one, I cannot have communion with an unimmersed person; because he is not a member of the church of Christ, however pious and holy he may be. I ask, is he a heathen, or publican? for such is the character of those excluded from the church. Matt. 18. All are either for or against Christ the Lord. "He that is not with me is against me." Shall we say, all are the enemies of Christ who are not immersed? We dare not. If they are not enemies, or if they are not against him, they are for him and with him; shall we reject those who are with Jesus, from us? Shall we refuse communion with those with whom the Lord communes? Shall we reject those who follow not with us in opinion? Shall we make immersion the test of religion? and shall we centre all religion in this one point? Shall we more insist on this point, than on faith, repentance, and the love of God, connected with a life of holiness, mercy and self denial? . . .
>
> Do they really distinguish themselves above all others in piety and holiness, who reject from fellowship all the unimmersed? If this were a fact, it would be a prevailing argument indeed. I advise the Christians not to be too solicitous to enquire, "What shall this man, or those men do." Let them attend to their own duty. LET US STILL ACKNOWLEDGE ALL TO BE OUR BRETHREN, WHO BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS, AND HUMBLY AND HONESTLY OBEY HIM, AS FAR AS THEY KNOW HIS WILL, AND THEIR DUTY. (Emphasis mine, v.c.)[1]

4. "But I've always been taught there is only one church." So there is. But in view of the thoughts considered in this discussion, can it not be that this one church consists of more than just certain ones in "our group"? Some of us have denominationalized ourselves to the extent that many have a purely sectarian concept of the church. We have given the church an "official" name: "Church of Christ." The Lord's church had no title. Some have given up the plea "No Creed but Christ," which was so much a part of Restoration sentiment, and which was the basis for the thoughts expressed by Campbell, Stone, Lipscomb, and others, and substituted a complex creed, which, though not written, is as real as any which is. *There are those who seem to have assumed a "brotherhood orthodoxy," and expect all within to be conformists, or else be effectively excommunicated as heretics. To these, tradition has become law, custom has become ritual, theology is prefabricated, and they have been appointed doorkeepers of God's kingdom.* As a result, there are minds which have become parasitic—afraid to think for themselves or question the orthodoxy. The pressure is great, and is reminiscent of the power of Roman Catholicism over the minds of its adherents. The sermon of Paul to the Jews in Acts 13:16-41, and to the Gentiles in Acts 17:16-31; his conduct in regard to the Jews in Acts 21:17-26; the sentiments, attitude, and expressions of John in his first epistle, which he wrote many years after Pentecost to people who had no New Testament; would be considered inadequate, unsound, and misleading to many today. *There are those who could no longer fellowship Campbell, Stone, Lipscomb, and others of equally liberal view, though they speak glowingly of their work of Restoration, and perhaps thus place themselves in the position of those described*

[1] Barton W. Stone, *The Christian Messenger*, Volume V, pp. 19-21.

by Jesus who garnish the tombs of the dead prophets and then hasten to kill the live ones.[1]

CONCLUSION:

I. WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

The Restoration Movement began a wonderful work, but became bogged down in its own success, as men of poorer understanding began to sectarianize that which was to have been characteristically non-sectarian. Many stopped saying, "We don't claim to be the only Christians," and began boldly declaring, "We most certainly ARE the only Christians!" The plea, "let us unite in a humble search for truth," capitulated to the cry, "Come to us, we alone have the truth!" The enlivening spirit of "we are on our way" gave way to the deadening philosophy of "we have arrived!" Search for truth melted away into an attitude of fervertly defending the status quo.

II. WHAT IS THE SITUATION TODAY?

A beautiful attitude of restoration fluidity has thus in some areas crystalized into a static attitude of dogmatism. *Hence, in many minds, the Restoration Movement is no longer a movement, but has stagnated into a creedalized denomination, with the ever-increasing danger of its followers becoming a part of a mentally inert herd, an amorphous mass, with no real Spirit of its own.*

III. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Perhaps there are those of us who need a rebirth of the spirit of restoration, a de-sectarianizing of our thinking, a destruction of creedalistic concepts and party perspectives, greater love for truth, greater love for all men, greater love for Christ, a more genuine spirit of humility, and less a spirit of proud legalism, absolutism, and adamant exclusivism. A return to the plea of "No Creed but Christ," with all that this implies, can perhaps help us to regain the rich concept of New Testament Christianity in all of its fulness.

[1] Matthew 23:29-36 (A.S.V.).

DRIFTING AND DREAMING

by W. Carl Ketcherside

It was Sunday evening and the fashionably attired members were filing into the large brick church edifice. The men halted upon the top step and took a last long draw upon their cigarettes before flipping them into the yard. Ushers in faultless dress led them down soft carpeted aisles to the deeply cushioned pews. The jingle of gold bracelets was heard as painted women put dainty hands to well-arranged coiffures. Everyone was relaxed in the air-conditioned comfort. It was a momentous occasion because the new minister was to speak on "Restoring the New Testament Church." A special invitation had been given through a costly advertisement in the Saturday paper, for all members of sectarian churches to attend. Some of these had accepted and were already present.

The minister left his air-conditioned study in the six room parsonage adjoining the church building. He paused in front of the hall mirror to give his tie a final pat, and to arrange the flower on his coat lapel. In front of the church building, he paused again to admire the large lighted sign: "CHURCH OF CHRIST — James A. McKendree, Minister." It was a distinct honor to be the minister of such a congregation. He recalled the statement of his instructor at the theological seminary in Nashville when he was a preacher student. "You men can write your own paychecks. You can get fifty, eighty or a hundred dollars per week. It just depends upon what will satisfy you. We want the graduates of this institution to demand and receive what they are worth, so it will not reflect against the school." The minister smiled. His check read much more than the maximum mentioned each week. Now if he could just convince some of the prominent Baptists and Methodists that this was the New Testament church, his reputation would be made.

During his sermon he was irked by the lack of attention by his own members. One of the elders slept off the effects of a heavy afternoon meal. Two of the women who taught classes on Sunday morning whispered to each other during the service. But the people he sought to impress—the sectarians—gave good attention. He belabored human creeds, sprinkling for baptism and instrumental mu-

sic in the worship. He pointed out that none of these were characteristic of the New Testament church, and we must eliminate them if we would restore the church our Lord died to purchase. He was eminently satisfied with the sermon. He had delivered it before as a trial sermon at two other places, and in both cases it had won him the pulpit over other candidates.

After the sermon he took his place in the foyer, his wife by his side, and shook hands with the departing guests. He was thrilled when the Vice-president of the First National Bank, congratulated him, and informed him that he and his wife were thinking of affiliating themselves with the Church of Christ. He said, "Two of your elders are members of the Rotary Club, and while we were playing cards at my house the other night, they were kidding me, as they always do at our noon luncheons at the hotel on Wednesday. They told me that my sprinkling didn't have enough water in it to wash away any very big sins, and I could see they had Bible for what they said.' '

The preacher did not often dream. His slumber was generally undisturbed. But on this Sunday night, he had the church on his mind. Perhaps it was that, or it may have been the Swiss cheese on rye bread that he ate just before retiring. In any event, he had a strange experience in his sleep. He found himself in a narrow cobblestone street in a foreign city. He knew it was the Lord's Day, and he had never missed a gathering of the church. But how could he locate it? Strange though it seemed, he found himself able to understand the language of those on the street, and to speak it. He accosted a man who was richly dressed in native costume, "Sir, can you tell me where I can find the Church of Christ?" The man stared at him uncomprehendingly and shook his head in the negative. But a poorly clad individual with a slave owner's brand upon his forehead, waiting until the rich man passed on, stepped to his side, and whispered, "Perhaps, sir, you look for the community of the holy ones. Come with me!"

They walked a mile before turning down a darkened alley. The preacher shuddered. His feet were paining him from the exertion. In a narrow aperture between two buildings a flight of stairs led upward. The guide began to climb. Two full flights he went before he stopped in front of a rude door. He opened it and entered, beckoning for the preacher to follow. A company of men and women sat

around a long table containing food. "It is the feast of love," said the guide, "come, be seated."

An aged man with long beard arose, and spoke, "Welcome brothers, to the feast of charity. We have been awaiting your arrival. As our beloved brother Paul has instructed so have we done. When we came together to eat, we tarried one for another. Now let us thank God for his rich mercy." Food was passed to the guest, strange food but well-prepared. Those who appeared to be possessed of some means served the poor, the slaves, and the ill-clad. Each appeared to esteem others better than himself. Inquiries were made as to the welfare of those not present.

At the close of the meal, the aged man who had extended the welcome at the beginning, now took his place at the head of the table. Before him rested a loaf of bread and a cup of liquid. The aged one spoke, "Dearly beloved, let us engage in praise to God and edification of one another." A man arose and began a hymn of praise. It was different than anything the visitor had ever heard. It was more like a chant than a song. At its conclusion, a man arose who identified himself as a shoe cobbler. His fingers were blackened with the prick of the awl. But he lifted his stained hands in a gesture which seemed gentle and kind, as if in benediction. He spoke feelingly of the need for personal consecration and for separation from the world. He told of his own surrender to the Christ, and how the Spirit had fashioned his life into one of utility and service even as he took scraps of leather and made from them the sandals which brought comfort to the feet of those who journeyed along the roads.

When he sat down, the slave who had guided the preacher arose, and declared the preceding remarks had stirred him to give personal testimony to his own faith. He belonged to an unbelieving master. He was often beaten. His body bore the marks of the lash. He had secured the right to attend the service by toiling all night, treading the waterwheel in the irrigation canal. But his spirit was free. He urged all who were free in body to use that freedom to free others from sin. The lash of the master could not make a mark upon the spirit. Some wept openly as he spoke.

He was followed by a fruit merchant from the bazaar, who relinquished his place to a weaver of cloth. Each shaped his words from the experience of his own life or trade. When no one else signified a desire to speak, the president, with a tone of sadness, said,

"Brethren, beloved, you know that our dear Jason was apprehended in the week past for proclaiming the words of this life in the marketplace. At his trial he was sentenced to banishment. He is now in custody awaiting a ship sailing from our shores. He will need our prayers and our assistance. Let those whose hearts are moved to have fellowship in his suffering, give to his succor, and the servants of the community of holy ones will see that he receives your grace ere he sails." Everyone except the preacher arose as if by common impulse and moved toward the head of the table. Some placed money on the table in front of the president. One man, stripped off a beautiful cloak, and folding it, placed it on the table, saying, "He will need it more than do I, and may our dear Lord grant him abundant mercy." Another removed the sandals from his feet and placed them with the garment.

A solemn hush fell over the assembly. The bearded patriarch took the loaf in his hand. He gazed upon it and the tears welled to his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. He spoke of suffering, of cruel death on a tree, of hope springing anew from an open tomb. Lifting his eyes toward heaven he gave thanks. Every man and woman present at the table said, "Amen!" The bread was passed to all. Next the cup was given to them, and tears coursed down the cheeks of rich and poor, master and slave, alike. Afterwards all of them kneeled. One after another they prayed fervently. The slave, kneeling beside the preacher, prayed, "Dear Master, bless our brother who has come to us from afar to be our guest this day"—and just at this juncture the preacher awakened.

The next morning, as his wife set the ham and eggs before him for breakfast, he said to her, "I had the craziest dream last night. I thought I was in some foreign country, but I couldn't tell where. I stopped a man on the street and asked the location of the church. Some fellow who looked like a tramp took me upstairs in a building that had no sign on it, so I couldn't tell what it was. We went into a room where some crackpot group was holding some kind of religious service. I don't know what they belonged to, but they were fanatics. They cried a lot, even while one of their number was trying to sing a solo. It was the funniest place you ever saw—no pulpit, no minister, no sermon, no song leader, and no order to their service. Anyone who wanted to could get up and talk, even shoe cobblers and servants. I wonder what on earth makes a person have such fantastic dreams?"

"Did they use instrumental music?" asked his wife, smilingly.

"No, they didn't have that," he replied.

"Well, they were right on one thing at least," she said.

"Yeah, but that's about the only thing," said the preacher. "If you'll excuse me, I believe I'll go up and polish up another talk on restoration. I think we've got some of the sectarians in this town eating out of our hand."

Remember that within four decades communism, as a state power, has spread through roughly 40 per cent of the world's population and 25 per cent of the earth's surface.

When the Communist Party was at its peak in the United States it was stronger in numbers than the Soviet Party was at the time it seized power in Russia.—*J. Edgar Hoover*

We are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, or to tolerate error so long as reason is left free to combat it.

—*Thomas Jefferson*

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GREAT IDEAS

by Gerald Richards

From earliest times men have wrestled with the great problems of the world. Wondering about the meaning of human existence, they have asked, "What is man? Where did he come from? Where is he going?" They have puzzled over the conditions about them. Such questions as why there is pain and suffering and why evil have entered their minds. They have attempted to pierce beyond the visible world asking, "Is there a God? If so, what is his nature?" They have searched for the true, the good, and the beautiful.

As different men spent much time in serious thought searching for the answers to these great problems, they came up with partial solutions for themselves and for others. Eventually these ideas found their way into literature. Literature of one people found its way into the hands of other contemporary peoples and of subsequent generations. As more thought was concentrated on these problems, more light was shed upon them. As different ideas were shared by different individuals, there developed over the years what has been called the Great Conversation.

The Great Conversation is based upon the accumulated thinking of mankind about the most difficult problems. The Great Ideas are the thoughts which make up the Great Conversation. Whether they come from king or peasant, if they be serious attempts to solve the problems of human life, they are great ideas.

These ideas are important by virtue of the fact that they *do* deal with the great problems of human existence. For this reason alone they should be important to the Christian. Too often the Christian has neglected to examine the noble attempts of man to discover the good, the true, and the beautiful. If an examination of the Great Ideas would do nothing else, it would vividly portray to the Christian the stirring drama of man's search for the meaning of reality. It would help the Christian to appreciate more fully his heritage—the fact that he lives this side of the Cross. It would humble him to

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see that through past ages God has not left Himself without witness but has filled the hearts of many with gladness. (Acts 14:17)

The Great Ideas and Christian Morality

One of the amazing discoveries that one makes as he examines the moral statements of great literature written before the Christian era is the substantial agreement between these great moral ideas and the teachings of Christ. A striking example of this agreement is a comparison of statements from different non-Biblical sources with some Biblical statements concerning the subject of brotherly conduct among men. Statements such as the following come to us from the ages preceding the Christian era: "Utter not a word by which anyone could be wounded"—Hindu; "Slander not"—Babylonian; "Terrify not men, or God will terrify thee"—Ancient Egyptian; "Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you"—Confucius; and "Men were brought into existence for the sake of men that they might do one another good"—Roman, Cicero. Compare with these statements the utterances of the Old Testament: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Love the stranger as thyself". Then consider Jesus' statement, "Do to men what you wish men to do to you".

Such striking similarities could be given concerning kindness, duties to parents, duties to children, justice, truthfulness, mercy, etc.[1] However, we will not detail these similarities further. Our only desire here is to point out that there *is* substantial agreement between these great moral ideas and the teachings of Christ.

This observation causes one to reconsider his ideas concerning God and His dealings with mankind.[2] A common Christian idea is that God, prior to His revelation through Christ, was concerned only with the Jews and was not interested in the other peoples of the world. But, in the light of a common morality existing among all peoples, we should revise our thinking. Possibly God was and is interested in *all* peoples. Could it be true that the image of God in man, though marred by sin, can be seen as a law of conscience or law of human nature in all men? And that men acted and wrote in agreement with one another when they yielded to this external law? The answer to these questions we believe to be yes.

In the light of this agreement between men's great moral ideas and the teachings of Christ,[3] we might consider anew the Christian revelation. Some have come to the conclusion that Jesus was nothing

more than one in a line of great moral teachers, saying some old things in new ways and adding some eccentricities of his own. On the surface this view may seem plausible. The view is weakened considerably, however, in the light of the claims of Jesus as recorded by New Testament writers. For Jesus claimed to be the Divine Redeemer of the world. And it is here that we see the significance of Christianity. The Christian religion, although completing and perfecting all of man's efforts at morality, was not given to the world primarily as a moral code. Its uniqueness rests in the nature and work of its Author, Jesus the Christ. Who Christ was and what He did are the relevant questions in the matter. The vital facts are that Jesus was Divine and that He provided for the redemption of mankind through His crucifixion and resurrection.[4]

In addition, the agreement among moral codes helps us to see that an appeal to morality is not groundless. There is a common ground between Christians and non-Christian. We should appeal to the law of conscience in our efforts to help our fellowmen see their moral responsibilities. The laws of human nature should be set before scientist, politician, laborer, and educator alike.[5] Making men morally sensitive should be one of our great aims. To be sure, a Christian would not be satisfied in making men sensitive to the moral law without leading them further to the One Who is the Alpha and the Omega of the moral law itself, to the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But begin we must. Let us use the groundwork that is already there.

Cicero, Plato, and Right Attitudes

Pre-Christian writers, surprising though it may seem, quite often lay stress on important matters which contemporary Christians neglect. It is not the case that we Christians have not been given guiding principles in the Scriptures concerning the values of life. We have either willfully or ignorantly overlooked them. We are all moving so fast in the business of existing that pleasure, convention, material things, and trivialities have captured undue portions of our time and energies. So then, in the hope of finding encouragement for fearless living, let us take a look at life from a different viewpoint. Let us examine some pre-Christian statements concerning the significant things of life.

Cicero (106 B.C.-43 B.C.), a famous Roman orator and statesman, has some interesting things to say to us concerning right attitudes toward life in his treatise, *On Old Age.* Cicero writes this treatise to a friend to encourage him in old age. He speaks of noble character as stemming from the inner man and not being dependent upon circumstances or material things. He writes, "Men who have no inner resources for a good and happy life find *every* age burdensome." He says further, "I have often listened to the complaints of old men . . . who lamented that they had lost the pleasures of the senses, without which life is nothing. . . . In all complaints of this kind, the fault is in the character of a man, not his age."

We think that Cicero was influenced by the great Greek thinker, Plato (428 B.C.-348 B.C.). In Plato's account of Socrates trial before an Athenian jury (in the work called *Apologia*) on the charge of not recognizing the gods that the state recognized, there are statements that point out the importance of the inner life. Socrates, in his defence, reminds the jury that he will continue his teaching even if set free. He says, " I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting anyone whom I meet and saying to him after my manner: You, my friend, . . . are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? . . . For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private."

These statements from Cicero and Plato (and Socrates) are quite impressing. *Character is dependent upon inner resources!* The greatest improvement of the soul is of *first* importance. The pleasures of the senses, money, property, honor, and reputation are of less importance and even not to be taken thought of. How thrilling! Men living in environments weighted down with pagan gods and worldly emphases dig through the dross to find some golden gems! Or are they gems? Perhaps we are speaking too soon. Upon further reflection we doubt whether Plato, Cicero, or Socrates would be received in our twentieth century. After all, one of the "accepted truths" of psychology is that persons should conform to existing social patterns if they would avoid traumatic experiences. And further, we do want

to win friends and influence people. And I must find an occupation that will bring me money and prestige. And what's wrong with pleasure? I believe that we are supposed to enjoy ourselves in this life. Gobbledygook! As a Christian we believe that Plato, Socrates, and Cicero did uncover spiritual gems. And they did it without our unfailing guide, special Divine Revelaton. How much better we should do!

It would be so helpful to us a Chrstians if we could grasp the significance of these truths, especially since Christ and His Ambassadors set these truths before us as necessary to the well-being of the spiritual life. Christ continually sets the life of the spirit above the life spent in being overly concerned about food, clothing, and shelter. And the life of Christ is a living testimony of His statements. Also the Apostle Paul learned to be content in whatever condition he found himself.

We as Christians desire to follow Christ and to do His bidding. We accept as true His statements concerning the importance of the spiritual life and the relative unimportance of the life of the senses. What is it, then, that keeps up wrapped up in trivialities and unconcerned about serious matters? Or if concerned, how are we to break the bonds that bind us and to live victoriously the life of the spirit?

We must return to our "first love" for Christ. We must renew our pledge to Christ that we would follow wherever He would lead. Coupled with this must be a continued struggle to forget ourselves and to be concerned less and less about what others do and think. If we would just "let go" and daily pray, "Lord, I cannot do it, but You can. Help me to care less and less about the non-spiritual things of life," our desires would weaken, we would find ourselves being less concerned about conforming to this maddening world, and we would take up anew the serious task of cultivating the soul.

There is a logic behind the unimportance of the things of the senses and the importance of the spiritual life. The things which we see, touch, hear, smell, or taste will perish with this world. Only will the spirit remain. If the spirit has not put on love, mercy, peace, kindness, goodness, and so forth—then what remains? If these traits have not been supplied us, how can we dwell in God's presence?

If we are tempted to spend our time and energies with trivialities and neglect the cultivation of the soul, let us take courage in

the face that others, guided by much less light, saw some of the true values of life and sought to put them into practice.[6]

The Great Ideas and Human Nature

Most of those who write about the great problems of mankind are keen students of human nature. They seem to possess a deep insight into the workings of the human mind. This is as would be expected, for how can one think and write ably about man's problems unless he knows man himself. Some of these writers did not stop at observing human nature, but they wrote of the needs of human nature as well.

We would do well to see the relevance of these great ideas concerning human nature to the Christian and to contemporary religious problems. Many of these ideas become most practical under our present stress.

One of the problems of modern Christianity which is becoming more and more evident to thinking people everywhere is that of division and sectarianism. People have grown weary of the fighting and bickering resulting from religious division. And further, as a result of the rise of totalitarian communism, we are beginning to see the dire need of a united front.

Most problems develop over a long period of years as a consequence of the thoughts and actions of many individuals. They are complex in nature. No simple answer acts as a panacea. Discovering answers involves the expending of much time, energy, and thought. They are usually only found as an outgrowth of the sharing by different individuals of their findings. We doubt that the problems of division and sectarianism in Christendom will be solved any differently.

Several attempts have been made in search of a solution to this problem. Most of us are familiar with some of the efforts of the World Council of Churches in this direction. Many of us are familiar with various religious groups each of which claims that unity can be brought about by yielding to its doctrines and to its doctrines alone. The present writer labors under the conviction that the unity which our Lord speaks of in the New Testament can only be brought about by a restoration of the principles and ideals of primitive Christianity.

One of the common objectons to the thesis of the restoration of

primitive Christianity is that it will not work (it is not practical) in this day and time. This objection is made not only by those who disagree with the thesis but also by many of those who give lip service to it. Many who accept the thesis are satisfied in substituting a partial restoration of New Testament ideals for the restoration of primitive Christianity itself. Even agreeing that a New Testament practice is not being followed, they rest content in the reply, "It just will not work today."[7]

Such an answer involves more than just the practicality or the effectiveness of a particular principle. The envolvement goes much deeper. It embraces the questions of authority, obedience, and faith as they apply to the New Testament revelation. But we will be concerned now only with pointing out that some vital New Testament practices, which are neglected by modern Christianity, are not only considered practical but also are thought necessary to the mental and moral well-being of men by great thinkers past and present.

One of the vitalizing principles of New Testament Christianity is the principle that every Christian is a minister, that he enters the ministry the moment he becomes a Christian. It logically follows that the relationship among Christians will be one of mutual ministry. First century Christians had the opportunities of exhorting, edifying, and comforting one another. Out of love for their fellows they accepted these opportunities as responsibilities. And at what times could they discharge these responsibilities and take advantage of these opportunities more effectively than when the assembly met as a body of worshippers? And so, when the early Christians assembled for worship, the members were given opportunity to edify one another. Each was permitted to express his individuality and to declare freely his opinions.

God knows human nature better than we do. Therefore we have a clue to human needs in the principles set forth by God through the apostles for the life and worship of the Christian. Individuality and freedom of expression are *necessary* to spiritual maturity. Especially are individuality and freedom of expression necessary for progress in the direction of restoring primitive Christianity to this earth.

What Freedom Means

John Stuart Mill, English philosopher (1806-1873), has some interesting things to say along these lines. In his *Essay on Liberty* he argues ably that liberty of thought and discussion and individuality are two of the elements necessary for the intellectual and moral well-being of man. Concerning the freedom of opinion and the freedom of the expression of opinion, he argues thus:

> First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.
>
> Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.
>
> Thirdly, even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds. And not only this, but, fourthly, the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience.

Only in those congregations of Christians where individuals are free to express themselves will there be any progress toward the realization of restoration ideals. For if members do not have the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas, and interpretations there will be little growth.

Not only will the restoration of primitive Christianity be approached through freedom of expression but also the spiritual well-being of saints will be cared for. With each generation examining the ground on which it stands, questioning custom and tradition, seeking the whys and wherefores of its religious practices, and opening old ideas to the light of new evidence, there will be developed individuals whose religious practices will rest upon heartfelt convictions founded upon reason and personal experience and not based upon prejudice or custom.

In congregations where the individual is not free to express himself in edifying, exhorting, and comforting his fellow-Christians (which includes most modern congregations) there results a stagnation of talent, a loss of spirituality, and the development of a performer-spectator relationship. People exchange personal piety for

church attendance and personal ministry for church business. They are told so often and so loud that *this* is Christianity that they fail to see that there is, in itself, no virtue in church attendance and that church business may become sinful by taking the time and place of more vital ministries.

Mutual Ministry Will Work!

Although the absence of mutual ministry tends toward decline and its presence toward growth, we still hear in the background the cry, "But it won't work today. It's not practical." (Whatever that means) It would help us if we were to examine the modern laymens' movements. Most of these movements began because someone saw the need for giving the common member opportunity to express himself. That these movements have produced good results cannot be denied.

Again a great thinker comes to the front. This time he is a contemporary philosopher, Elton Trueblood. In one of his books he sets forth the thesis that the preservation of Western Civilization from decay and destruction can be brought about by a redemptive society patterned after primitive Christianity.[8] In this society, he says, every member will be a minister (The distinction between clergy and laity will be abolished.). Mr. Trueblood not only thinks that mutual ministry is practical, but he deems it necessary to the revitalization of Christianity.

The present writer never ceases to be amazed when he compares this philosopher with those who claim to be restorers of New Testament Christianity. Mr. Trueblood looks for that society which will save Western Civilization and comes up with a society patterned after the primitive congregation of Christians! Those who claim to be restorers of New Testament Christianity look at some of the practices of the primitive congregation and say, "It won't work today."

Why won't it work today? Could it be that we don't want it to? Could it be that we don't care whether it works or not? Or is it that we just don't want to pay the price inherent in a work of reformation? If the plea to restore primitive Christianity will not move us, perchance the plea to save Western Civilization will!

Summary

The great ideas are relevant to the Christian in many respects.

In the moral realm they give us a larger picture of our God and His dealings with mankind, cause us to reflect upon the significance of special revelation, and help us to see that there is common ground between Christian and non-Christian. The great ideas concerning attitudes toward life and the important things of life encourage us to fight more strenuously the temptations that face us and to live victoriously the life of the spirit. The great ideas relative to human nature show us that God's program for the church is in harmony with the well-being of man and that His program can be practical and effective.

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1 C. S. Lewis has collected for us some illustrations of these similarities in the appendix to his book, *The Abolition of Man*. Other illustrations could be found by reading the works of religious and moral thinkers.

2 A pathetic void in Christian education is a serious study of the character, attributes, and works of God. As a result we get a distorted concept of Him and are shocked when it is suggested that He is "bigger" than we think Him to be. This is a weakness which we have difficulty in overcoming. Perhaps J. B. Phillips' *Your God is Too Small* would help us.

3 It must be pointed out that all don't share this view of the substantial agreement among the great moral statements of the world. The deniers of this view are of two divergent schools of thought. Those who claim that morality is nothing more than national, racial, or social convention emphasize the disagreements among moral codes. Over-zealous Christian apologists at times compare the noble statements of Jesus with much less noble statements from others in an effort to present the strongest contrast between Christianity and other moral codes. There is some truth uncovered by both approaches. Certainly there are disagreements among the moral codes of mankind. Truly the moral statements of the Son of God are more noble than others. What both approaches overlook are the underlying principles which bind all moral codes together.

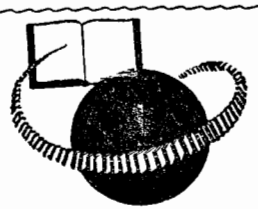
4 The corruption of a Christian's spirituality by distraction of his mind from Who Christ is and what He did to the idea that He was just a "great teacher" whose moral statements are "different" is illustrated by C. S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*, letter twenty-three. In this letter, Screwtape, a senior devil, instructs Wormwood, a junior devil, in the art of corrupting spirituality.

5 An interesting volume dealing with the restoration of morality to education on the basis of the moral law is a volume that we have previously mentioned. It is C. S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*.

6 There are two errors that Christians make when examining the lives of non-Christians. Emphasing the good in a person, they sometimes try to make him a Christian. Or, emphasing the bad, they attempt to construe him as a profligate pagan. We need not follow either of the two extremes. There is a middle way. We should take the good for what it is worth, at the same time not overlooking the bad. This middle road would apply in the cases of Cicero, Plato, and Socrates. No one would deny that Socrates, for example, would be considered immoral by Christian standards because of some of his actions. At the same time, however, we might well ask ourselves whether we measure up to some of Socrates noble actions.

7 To some individuals an ideal is an unattainable goal. Such ones further reason that since an ideal is unattainable they are under little or no obligation to attempt to put it into practice. However, there is nothing in the nature of an ideal which makes it unattainable. Furthermore, it *is* of the nature of an ideal that attempts be made to attain it. If not, why have ideals?

8 The book referred to is *Alternative to Futility*. Another enlightening book dealing with the subject in detail by the same author is *Your Other Vocation*.



Notes On Recent Literature

CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation, E. Harris Harbison, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1956, $3.00.

The purpose of this small volume (177 pp.), which is based on a series of lectures delivered by the author at Princeton Theological Seminary, is clearly set forth in the following quotation from its preface: ". . . what follows is an attempt to suggest what a Christian scholar is like, how he comes by a sense of his calling, how he may reconcile his scholarly zeal with his Christian faith, and how his work affects the development of Christianity, through a study of a few Christian scholars of the Reformation period and some of their predecessors who influenced them." The author devotes one chapter to Jerome, Augustine, Abelard, and Aquinas; another to Petrarch, Valla, Pico delal Mirandola, and John Colet; and a chapter each to Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin. Harbison admits that a thorough study of the subject about which he is writing should go much further; he has, however, chosen to, ". . . talk in particular rather than in general, to concentrate on a few important and well-known figures rather than to catalogue the many, to suggest rather than to conclude."

Christian scholarship was of vital consequence in the age of the Reformation. It was after all, as the author points out, a scholar's insight into meaning of Scripture that provided the necessary impetus for the Reformation to get under way. It was largely a scholar's movement, a revolution involving professors and students. The Counter-Reformation of the Catholic church was of the same nature. Thus it is essential to an understanding of the Reformation to approach it from the perspective of Christian scholarship, as well as from other standpoints.

The author points up the controversy that has existed through the history of Christianity with regard to the value of Christian scholarship by quoting from Tertullian. "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem, the Academy with the Church?," asked Tertullian. "What is there in common between the philosopher and the Christian, the pupil of Hellas and the pupil of Heaven?" His answer was in no uncertain terms: "We have no need for curiosity since Jesus Christ, nor for inquiry since the Evangel." Yet, as Harbison states, almost from the beginning of Christianity there have been individuals who have pursued scholarship as a Christian calling, in the belief that they were doing the will of God. The author believes that scholarship as a

Christian calling has not been given the attention it deserves by students of history. His suggested explanation for this failure is that scholars do not make good copy and never have!

There are three major tasks, according to Harbison, which confront Christian scholars in any generation: (1) to reinvestigate the Hebrew-Christian tradition, (2) to show the relationship of that tradition to secular culture and its tradition, (3) to effect a reconciliation between Christian faith and science, using the latter term in a broad sence. The person who follows scholarship as a Christian calling must address himself to one of these three tasks or to some combination of the three.

Erasmus once wrote, "People say to me: How can scholarly knowledge facilitate the understanding of Holy Scripture? My answer is: How does ignorance contribute to it?" This great Reformation humanist was capable of seeing both the value and the lighter side of scholarship in its relationship to the Christian faith. In connection with this, Harbison makes the very valuable observation that,

> Just because a man gives himself wholeheartedly to the profession of Christian Scholarship, this does not mean he must believe that learning is the whole of life. Nor if he sees the more human and ridiculous side of the intellectual's profession, this need not mean that he has lost faith in his calling . . . Erasmus knew his calling as a Christian scholar to be serious and important, but he also knew the presumption in it, the presumption that taints all human aspirations and must often amuse a loving God.

The author concludes by warning of the danger that exists if the possibility of a Christian devoting himself to scholarship is not taken seriously. The devastating result may be that sacred and secular learning will be separated: thus Christianity would cease to be intellectually respectable and honest, unable to cope with the challenge of secular culture. "The danger of final separation between sacred and secular learning can only be avoided if more men and women . . . acquire the vision of scholarship as a calling worthy of a Christian, and of Christianity as a commitment worthy of a scholar."

Harbison has written an interesting and valuable little book which I would recommend to those who are interested in Christian scholarship or those who would depreciate its value.

—Robert L. Duncan

EARLY APOLOGETICS

The Defence of the Gospel in the New Testament, F. F. Bruce. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 105 pp. $1.50.

Anyone who is acquainted with the writings of F. F. Bruce will expect to find this book to be of both academic worth and spiritual stimulation. He will not be disappointed.

The book contains five chapters, being five lectures which the author gave under the auspices of the Calvin Foundation at Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, in April, 1958. An index of Scripture references gives added usefulness to the volume.

Usually we think of Apologetics as a science for defending the faith in centuries following the New Testament period. Probably very few of us had ever thought of it as existing

within the New Testament. Therefore, the mere title of this book intrigues us. The element of debate and conflict within the New Testament itself is by no means negligible.

Chapter 1 deals with the gospel's battle with Judaism. After showing the beginnings of the controversy in the lifetime of Jesus, the author analyzes the viewpoints of Stephen and Paul. According to Mr. Bruce, Stephen's argument was that "If the gospel was true, then there was no place for Judaism." This left no note of hope for the nation and presented a grave problem in theodicy. Upon Paul fell the task of finding the answer to the riddle of Israel's position, which he did in Romans 11 by showing that even now there is a believing remnant, and that ultimately all Israel would be shaken out of the spirit of stupor to accept Christ.

Chapter 2 is entitled, "The Gospel Confronts Paganism." Mr. Bruce discusses Paul's speech at Lystra and his speech at Athens, claiming that in both instances Paul used a Biblical approach.

Chapter 3 deals with the conflict with Rome. Mr. Bruce regards Luke's writings as having the purpose of showing Theophilus, a high-ranking Roman, that Christianity is not incompatible with Roman citizenship. In the later New Testament period, as shown in I Peter and the Revelation, the picture had changed considerably, due largely to the rise of the imperial cult which demanded homage to the emperor, which the Christian could not conscientously render. The Christian was therefore assured that, although for the present he might have to suffer persecutions, eventually Christianity would triumph over the Roman imperial power and the imperial cult, which are symbolized by the two beasts of Revelation 13.

Chapter 4 discusses Christianity's battle with what the author calls "perversions of pure Christianity." The four movements he discusses are (1) Christianized legalism, (2) Ascetic Gnosticism, (3) Antinomian Gnosticism, and (4) Docetism. The first two perversions are countered by the writings of Paul, the third by Jude, and the fourth by John.

In Chapter five the author uses the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John to show "The Finality of the Gospel." There are some good insights in this chapter, but it has a basic weakness from the viewpoint of Apologetics. In emphasizing that the living Christ is THE WORD OF GOD the author fails to stress that we have an objective norm, the written Word, as a basis for he defence of the gospel.

Many scriptures will be given new illumination by this book. For example, "the water and the blood" of I John 5:6 are seen in opposition to the Corinthian Gnosticism, proving that the same Christ who went through the water of baptism also shed his blood on the cross.

One may disagree with Mr. Bruce at several points without impairing the general argument nor the worth of the book.

The reader will find the volume most refreshing and stimulating, a compendium of valuable analyses of Christianity's struggles in New Testament days.

Mr. Bruce's erudite background, particularly in the area of the book of Acts, always produces fruitful insight, while his clear style puts the information within the reach of the average reader. — Richard Ramsey, Director, Church of Christ Bible Chair, Southeastern Louisiana College, Hammond, La.

BIOGRAPHY

J. D. Tant—Texas Preacher. Fanning Yater Tant. Gospel Guardian Company, Lufkin, Texas. 1958. 479 Pages. $4.00.

This is the chronicle of an era, as well as the story of a man who lived in it. Jefferson Davis Tant was born in northern Georgia in 1861. He was immersed and became a Methodist when fourteen years of age. He started preaching in that denomination at the age of nineteen. In 1881 he came in contact with W. H. D. Carrington, a "Campbellite" preacher, and profoundly influenced by his plea, cast his lot with the Church of Christ at Buda, Texas, which accepted him on his previous baptism. Within a week he was granted a letter of commendation authorizing him "to preach the word, organize and take the oversight of Sunday Schools, and baptize any converts he may be instrumental in converting to Christ."

Thus began a career characterized by intense devotion to a cause, and by poor judgment in financial and business matters. The book reveals the Tant family almost constantly on the move, packing their furniture in freight cars or wagons for transportation to a new locality, suffering hardships imposed by the belief that the grass was greener in another pasture. An inveterate trader, the preacher was always swapping his place for the holdings of another, yet seldom bettering his condition, and generally increasing the burden of his wife and children. This state of things was not helped by the meager support of the churches.

As a preacher and debater, Tant was blunt and crude in speech. Many of the Mormon, Methodist and Baptist champions of the day were of the same caliber, and the rough-and-tumble, "dog-eat-dog" style of encounters, miscalled debates, pleased the ignorant and uninformed, as well as the bitter partisans in all groups. In many instances these religious skirmishes, filled with personal attacks and venom, served only to cement the sectarian spirit for several generations.

The fights which tore the disciple brotherhood to shreds are given full play. Among these was the one which developed over the use of the organ, the advocates of which frequently broke the lock off a meetinghouse door in the dead of the night, and spirited in the instrument, after which they entered suit in court to take the property from those who protested, and who were locked out of the places of worship they had constructed. Tant hurled himself into the fray against the use of the instrument and the missionary society. On the other hand, he was constantly called upon to defend the "Sunday School" by those who regarded it as an innovation equal to that of the organ.

One gathers that there has been a prolonged conflict between the Texas and Tennessee elements of the non-instrument group. This began over the position of David Lipscomb, J. N. Harding, et. al., of the *Gospel Advocate group,* relative to re-baptism.

"Generally speaking, David Lipscomb and the brethren who were associated with the *Gospel Advocate* took the position it was not necessary that a man who was immersed with a sincere desire to obey God was in truth and in reality baptized into Christ, even though he had thought he was already in Christ and had had his sins forgiven before the act of baptism. If such a man after being baptized affiliated himself with some denomination, all he had to do to become a faithful Christian was to renounce his denominational affiliation and take his stand among the people of God."

Branding this as an endorsement of "sect baptism," Austin McGary began to advocate that the validity of baptism depended upon the degree of knowledge possessed by the believing penitent, and the author states, "In Texas, the *Firm Foundation* was begun in 1884 by Austin McGary for the expressed purpose of combating Lipscomb's teaching on this subject." Tant himself was rebaptized after having preached for several years during which he had baptized many, and became a champion of the idea that has done more than any other to reduce the restoration plea to the status of a narrow, sectarian, partisan position. The paper fight between the Texas and Tennessee journals aroused feelings which have never been eradicated in the southland.

The author, a son of J. D. Tant, is one of the Texas leaders in a current controversy between two factions, one led by the *Gospel Guardian,* of which he is editor, and the other by the *Gospel Advocate.* The subject of dispute now is institutionalism, and the author does not resist the temptation to use his father's career for propaganda purposes, although hindered somewhat by the fact that J. D. Tant seems to have been on all sides of the question at the same time. Thus we find such apologetic statements as, "Not many of the brethren seemed to know exactly what Tant was criticizing," and again, "Tant's writing so vigorously in criticism of 'our Bible colleges' and then almost in the same breath commending them . . . was most puzzling to many of the brethren."

Perhaps G. C. Brewer best resolves the difficulty, in an article in *Gospel Advocate,* December 20, 1951, as follows:

"The editor of the *Gospel Guardian* . . . quotes J. D. Tant as opposing the orphan homes as an unscriptural method of caring for orphans at the time he was connected with the Tennessee Orphan Home. Thus J. D. Tant was shown to condemn as unscriptural that which J. D. Tant was practicing. This was not at all new to some of us oldsters. We know that J. D. Tant did that very thing on more than one point, but we would not, now that Brother Tant is dead, tell these things on him. They were overlooked when Tant was living on the ground that J. D. Tant was J. D. Tant."

After reading the book, that is also the primary conclusion of your reviewer—that J. D. Tant was J. D. Tant! —W. Carl Ketcherside

Study of Isms

The Church Faces The Isms. By the Faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Arnold Rhodes, Editor; Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1958. 304 pages. $4.50.

This book grew out of a course in the curriculum of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, according to the Preface, which states its purpose is to "help Christians, especially leaders in the Church, to prepare themselves to deal effectively and fairly with specific organized and unorganized movements which challenge main line Protestantism in particular ways." "The Church" is equated with "main line Protestantism" throughout the volume, a basic error, as this reviewer sees it. "Protestantism" as such, is also an *ism and* a challenge to the church of God. It is on a side track rather than on the main line. It is noteworthy that the one *ism* which the apostle Paul condemned so forcefully—sectism—is no longer regarded as an evil or a challenge.

The Isms are considered under three heads: (1) Isms predominantly biblical; (2) Isms both biblical and cultural; (3) Isms predominantly cultural. Under the first division are treatises on Fundamentalism, Adventism, Dispensationalism, and Perfectionism. These are designated as "Predominantly biblical" being espoused by "groups which differ from the larger denominations of Protestantism in their approach to biblical interpretation." It is possible the classification may be somewhat misleading.

Under the second heading, appear articles on Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Denominationalism and Ecumenism, and The Healing Sects. In this latter exposition, it appears that Dr. Harry G. Goodykoontz, Professor of Christian Education, confuses "the charisma of healing" as exercised by the elders and others in the primitive ekklesia, with psychiatry, group therapy, pastoral psychology, autosuggestion, and hypnotism, modern methods of treating the psychosomatic and emotionally disturbed.

Under the designation "Isms predominantly cultural," notice is given to Totalitarianism: Fascism and Communism; Racism; Naturalism, Scientism, Modernism; and Secularism. The average reader will find this section of particular interest, since it presents a study of these *isms* in language understandable by those who are not advanced students.

The format of the book is excellent. Each writer gives the origin and development of the *ism* with which he deals, followed by an outline of its salient features, with a suggested method of handling it. At the close of each chapter there are projects of study in which the interested researcher may engage in his own community. A bibliography has been compiled on each *ism,* which is not one-sided or prejudicial.

The writers are to be commended for their objectivity. This reviewer has never read a volume discussing religious differences, which exhibits less bias. The authors seem to "lean over backwards" in an attempt to be fair to the opposition. In this respect the work is exemplary. One is also impressed by the humility of the eminent scholars selected to deal with these important topics.

One statement worthy of special thought is this, "An inadequate conception of faith interferes with the practical application of biblical truth. Faith may be viewed simply as an intellectual assent to certain doctrines apart from a genuine commitment

of the total person to God through Jesus Christ, or it may be viewed as an emotional feeling apart from adequate comprehension. Either of these defects will impair the exercise of the third principle of interpretation. Even when faith is genuine, wisdom and effort are essential for the interpreter."

The personal reaction of the reviewer upon completing the volume is one of sadness produced by contemplation of the divided state of Christendom; of gratitude that scholarly men are facing up to the differences that exist and are seeking a solution; and of renewed dedication to the task of promoting the unity of all believers by a restoration of the primitive order, so that, in the words of another reformer, John Wesley, we may

"Let names, and sects, and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

—W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

Science in Everyday Things. William C. Vergara. Harper and Bro., New York. 1958. 308 p., $3.95.

Here is a book that you can pick up time and again, reading here and there, and always be better off for so doing. I recently took this book along with me to the park to read to my wife as we sat watching our daughter play. We had a delightful time fishing around in the great sea of science for fascinating and helpful information. Neither of us knew that "electric eels" do indeed have power to generate enough electricity to kill a man, that there are at least 75 million galaxies in the sky, that some mammals are venomous, and that the tallest mountains are in the ocean. Learning can be fun. Do you know what causes holes in Swiss cheese, what causes the northern lights, or what animal runs the fastest? Have you wondered if sea animals sleep in the water or if a baseball really curves or if pictures can be taken in the dark?

This unusual book answers the kind of questions our children ask us, but which we cannot answer! How does TV receive the picture you want and not all the others that are possible? Why does aluminum not tarnish? How do insects find their way home? What is the bottom of the ocean like? What causes the man in the moon?

The merit of the book is that it explains so many everyday things in everyday language. Mr. Vergara is not a man to waste words. When he explains harmones, enzymes, cosmic rays, the White Cliffs of Dover, or neon lights he talks like a common man and he makes every word count. I highly recommend this book to those among our readers who are trying to broaden their knowledge and to give more breadth and variety to their family library.

—LEROY GARRETT